



JINNAH AND GANDHI

2 Their Role in India's Quest for Freedom

It is general impression among the Indian historians of the present day that Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah alone was responsible for the partition of India. By many Indian writers, Quaid-e-Azam is depicted as virulent communalist who injected the virus of communalism in the body-politic of India, opposed the freedom movement of India, and deliberately destroyed the Hindu-Muslim unity by preaching a two nation theory. On the other hand, a picture of Gandhiji is drawn in which he is shown as presenting the quintessence of wisdom, virtue and love, and with his Ahimsa and Non-violence he is pictured as a re-incarnation of Budha. There is no doubt that both these pictures are extreme and erroneous.

In this book the author analysis the political religio-political and communal factors which led to the creation of two independent states—India and Pakistan. The author blames Gandhi, Jinnah and Nehru for the partition of the indian sub-continent. The author, however feels that the Gandhian leadership and his religio-political technique were responsible for the partition. The author poses a question about Jinnah - "was he really as communal as he is generally depicted to be?" His view is that Jinnah, initially guided by the purest nationalist sentiments and welfare of India as a whole, was later driven to a desperate communal position owing to the devious political strategy of the Gandhian Congress. The author has amply shown that the Quaid was not a communalist, but a liberal of high class and a politician of great principles and he could have nothing to do with the Gandhian-dominated congress.

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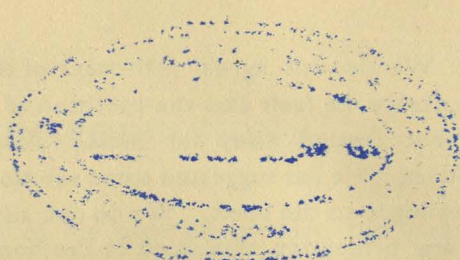
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Publisher's Note

During the Quaid-e-Azam centenary year we have pleasure in reprinting **Jinnah and Gandhi** by S. K. Majumdar, Barrister-at-law, Advocate, Patna High Court and Supreme Court of India. This book was first published in India in 1966. But as the readers will find, it could not have circulation in Pakistan because of suspension of trade between Pakistan and India during and after the war between the two countries in 1965. Now it is reprinted here in Pakistan.

In this book the author analyses the political, religio-political and communal factors which led to the creation of two independent states—India and Pakistan. The author blames Gandhi Jinnah and Nehru for the partition of the Indian sub-continent. The author, however feels that the Gandhian leadership and his religio-political technique were responsible for the partition. The author poses a question about Jinnah - "was he really as communal as he is generally depicted to be?" His view is that Jinnah, initially guided by the purest nationalist sentiments and welfare of India as a whole, was later driven to a desperate communal position owing to the devious political strategy of the Gandhian Congress. In these unhappy circumstances, fuel was added to fire by an indiscreet utterance by Nehru on his assumption, of presidentship of the Congress in July 1946. It was Promptly answered by the "Direct Action" on the part of the Muslims,

We do not agree with many of the views of the author, For instance, he feels that the partition of India solved no problem, but created many for India, Pakistan and so many other countries. He has suggested some solutions in the Introduction and epilogue to the book. We do not subscribe to these views. We are presenting this book in the hope that the character of Gandhian politics in India will be better understood as it has been so painstakingly and in such scholarly style expressed by an Indian author. Comparatively the role of Quaid - e - Azam as a politician becomes very clear. The author has amply shown that the Quaid was not a communalist, but a liberal of high class and a politician of great principles and he could have nothing to do with the Gandhian - dominated congress.

Abdul Rauf Malik

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the twentieth century, two great men, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Mohammad Ali Jinnah filled the political stage of India with their powerful personalities. Both were great leaders of men and both were pilgrims in the quest of Indian freedom. Both were actuated by the highest motives in their political activities but there was no room for co-existence between them as their ideologies were poles asunder, one being nurtured in the western way of politics and the other deadly opposed to it with an abhorrence for western civilisation itself. In these circumstances, it was impossible for them to work from the same platform and conflict between them was inevitable. But the conflict ended disastrously for India—let us hope temporarily—and changed the course of her history, which has always been rather for synthesis and integration than for division. Gandhi-Jinnah conflict which had begun at first as a political one, based on different political ideologies, gradually degenerated into a deadly communal battle. At the last stage, the political cauldron of India bubbled so sulphurously with fumes of communalism that the vivisection of the country seemed to be the best way out of the asphyxiating atmosphere that prevailed throughout the country.

There is a general impression in the Indian circles of the present day that Jinnah alone was responsible for the partition of India. By many Indian writers, Jinnah is depicted as a virulent communalist who injected the virus of communalism in the body-politic of India, opposed the freedom movement of India, and deliberately destroyed the Hindu-Muslim unity by preaching a two-nation theory. On the other hand, a picture of Gandhiji is drawn in which he is shown as representing the quintessence of wisdom, virtue and love, and with his Ahimsa

and Non-violence he is pictured as a re-incarnation of Buddha. There is no doubt that both these pictures are extreme and erroneous. In this book I have described their political activities and placed them in juxtaposition to each other, so that by comparison and contrast, their pictures are put in their proper perspective.

Gandhiji was undoubtedly one of the greatest men that the world has ever seen. His great services towards Indian freedom are acknowledged on all hands but at the same time there are many who think that Gandhian politics and Gandhian political techniques were as much responsible for the vivisection of India as Jinnah's two-nation theory. At times, Gandhiji handled the Hindu-Muslim problems from the wrong end of the stick. For example, there was no justification for his head-long plunge into the Khilafat Movement. The after-effects of his activities in connection with the Khilafat Movement were disastrous as they helped to rouse the religio-communal feelings of the Muslims, aggravating antagonism between them and the Hindus.

Among the numerous books which deal with Gandhiji's life and his stupendous activities, Tendulkar's Mahatma, Pyarelal's Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's History of the Congress stand out prominently. These books are mines of information but their authors have been so much overawed and overwhelmed with the great personality of the Mahatma that they have never ventured even to be mildly critical of his aim and activities. On the other hand, Jinnah's activities have not received an adequate or impartial treatment at the hands of these Indian historians. This has created an unfortunate imbalance in the study of contemporary Indian history, jeopardising the cause of truth.

In this book attempts have been made to study their activities from a fresh point of view and to present the other side of the shield of the Jinnah-Gandhi conflict. It is hoped that

this method of treatment will set right the historical imbalance and enable the posterity to come to a clear and balanced judgment with regard to a momentous period of Indian history.

II

Gandhiji went to South Africa in 1893 and there he led a valiant struggle on behalf of the Indian settlers against the tyranny of South-African whites. During his South-African days, he was profoundly influenced by the writings of Tolstoy, Thoreau and particularly by Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' and an idea developed in his mind that modern city-oriented civilisation was an evil. He was gradually inspired with the belief that he had a Life-Mission to curb the growth of the modern city-civilisation and to substitute in its place a new world-order or a new civilisation whose watch-word 'would be—'Back to village from city', 'Back to nature'. A deep conviction came to his mind that only in this way, violence could be eradicated from the world and a reign of non-violence or Ahimsa established. It was Gandhiji's dream to create such a Utopia in the world.

III

Utopias based on different ideologies have been attempted to be created in the past by some great thinkers. Lord Bacon, a great English lawyer who was born four hundred years ago was also inspired with such an idea. He elaborated his ideas in his book 'The New Atlantis' published two years before his death. His ideas stemmed from his faith in the greatness of the human destiny and of human capability. His thesis was—"Advancement of learning and advancement of knowledge were the special prerogatives of the human mind. Men are not mere animals erect but immortal gods who can achieve and fulfil their destiny only through the path of advancement of knowledge. Through this path alone, they can control and re-make the world". In support of his ideas, he laid greatest importance to the study of science and to the advancement of scientific knowledge. He said—"Let us learn the laws of

nature and we shall be her masters, as we are now in our ignorance, her thralls; science is the road to Utopia". "When science has sufficiently ferreted out the forms of things, the world will be the raw material of whatever utopia man may decide to make". "To perfect science so, and then to perfect social order by putting science in control would itself be utopia enough". Bacon died in 1626 but his ideas and thoughts made a profound impact on the British thinkers of the day and within forty years of his death the Royal Society—the greatest scientific association of the world was founded in 1662. On its foundation, the First Fellows of the Royal Society paid their respectful tribute to the memory of Bacon and specifically named him as their model and inspiration. After more than one hundred years the great minds of the French Enlightenment paid him similar tributes and dedicated the great master-piece of their intellectual enterprise, the *Encyclopedie* to the memory of Bacon. Thanks to the push given by Bacon, scientific knowledge grew by leaps and bounds in Europe and gradually Europe came in the vanguard of modern civilisation, while the East remained steeped in darkness and ignorance. India had to wait to get even a glimpse of scientific knowledge till the Britishers assumed the sovereignty of India.

IV

What Bacon did for England, Raja Ram Mohun Ray did for India. In the early part of the nineteenth century, when the East India Company proposed that education should be imparted to the people of India in indigenous lines in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, Ram Mohun Ray strongly opposed the proposal. In his opinion, introduction of science was the immediate need of the hour and for that purpose it was also necessary that for higher education English should be the medium of instruction. His views were accepted by the Government, and various institutions imparting education in arts, science and medicine on western lines were established in different parts of the country. A new chapter was opened

before the youth of the country and a new class of intelligentsia, imbued with western ideas arose. Movements for social and political reforms were started by them. The battle which Ram Mohun Ray started in his life-time against superstition, obscurantism and ignorance continued its triumphant march long after his death. It was this spirit which led to the founding of the Indian National Congress by those who were educated on western lines. From its impact with the west, India's intellectual mind awoke to full splendour from age-long hibernation.

V

Nearly a century after Raja Ram Mohun came on the Indian scene another prophet with altogether different ideas. He was no other than Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who had made, as we have mentioned before, great name and fame for himself in South Africa for his heroic struggle on behalf of the Indian settlers against the tyranny of the South African whites. He came to India with an aura round his personality and with a message for his countrymen. He said that all these years India had been treading on a wrong path and that her salvation lay in unlearning all she had learnt so long through the medium of science. His message was—"Back to Nature". "Shun cities and go back to villages", "Shun the path of science and technology, Shun the European system of medicine", "Shun the western civilisation altogether because it breeds nothing but evil and violence". He gave expression to his ideologies in his book "Hind Swaraj" which was published in 1909. Here are some extracts from the book:

"It is not the British people who are ruling India but it is modern civilisation, through its railways, telegraphs, and almost every invention which has been claimed to be a triumph of civilisation. Bombay, Calcutta and other chief cities of India are the real plague spots.

"Medical science is the concentrated essence of black Magic. Quackery is infinitely preferable. Hospitals are

instruments that the devil has been using for his own purposes.....

“India’s salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the last fifty years or so. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors and such like have all to go.” (Mahatma Gandhi’s ideas, by Rev. C. F. Andrews, p. 186-188).

When Gokhale read Gandhiji’s Hind Swaraj, he thought it so crude and hastily conceived that he prophesied that Gandhi himself would destroy the book after spending a year in India (Gandhiji’s Autobiography, p. 467). Gokhale’s prophecy did not come out to be true. In 1939, Gandhiji wrote—“Hind Swaraj was written in 1909. Since then it has undergone many editions and has been translated into many languages of the world. I was asked last year by Shrimati Sophia Wadia to write a foreword for the edition she was bringing out. I, therefore, had the pleasure of having to re-read it carefully. The reader may know that I could not revise a single idea. It is not an attempt to go back to the co-called ignorant Dark Ages. **But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness. I have pictured that as my ideal**”. (Tendulkar V. 5, P. 175).

In a speech on October 25, 1939 before Gandhi Seva Sangh he said as follows:

“I would ask you to read **Hind Swaraj** with my eyes and see therein the chapter on how to make India non-violent. You cannot build non-violence on a **factory civilisation**, but you can build it on self-contained villages.” (Do. p. 185-189).

To Jawaharlal he wrote in October 1945 :

“.....I am now an old man...I have, therefore, named you as my heir. I must, however, understand my heir and my heir should understand me. I am convinced that if

India is to attain true freedom and **through India world also**, then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns.....We can realise truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and that simplicity can be found in Charkha and all that Charkha connotes.....(Tendulkar, V. 7, p. 14).

He had no fascination whatsoever for science or scientific progress. He wrote—

“The modern rage for variety, for flying through air, for multiplicity of wants, etc. have no fascination for me. They deaden the inner being in us.”

“Speed is not the end of life. I can not only imagine but **am working for a civilisation** in which possession of a car will be considered no merit and the railways will find no place. **It would not be for me an unhappy event, if the world become once more as large as it used to be at one time.** (Tendulkar V. 5, p. 174-175).

Gandhiji's aversion to science was due to his conviction that scientific developments have increased the forces of violence in this world. Non-violence was his creed and he wanted to make India a bastion of non-violence. According to him, force or violence in any form was not to be tolerated in India. These must not be used even against aggressors. Self-suffering and other non-violent devices are sufficiently potent weapons to melt the heart of evil-minded persons, even of aggressors. When the question was put to Gandhiji that if force was to be abolished and non-violence adopted, how would the State deal with problems of law and order and aggression. His answer was—

“If the Congress could not abstain from the use of force, the Congress must not seek power until it acquired non-violent control over the masses.....(in case of foreign aggression) it would lead the nation to a discarding of arms in repelling foreign attack and would develop a band of

non-violent men who would become a living wall against the aggressor.....(Sitaramayya V. 2 p. 191).....**I do not want the Army** (p. 192).

On the outbreak of the Second World-War, the Commander-in-Chief in India gave a broadcast talk for the purpose of recruiting Indian soldiers. Protesting against the said talk, Gandhiji said as follows :

"I must wholly dissent from the view that India is a military country. And I thank God that it is not. For me the defence forces are of the least importance in the make-up of the nation.....I have not lost the hope that the masses will rely upon their own capacity for suffering to save their country's honour....." (Tendulkar, V. 5. p. 170-171).

This idea Gandhiji further developed in his 'Letter to Every Briton' during the Second World War. Here are extracts from the said letter (Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Vol. 2, p. 217-218) :

"...I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of relations between nations and other matters...."

"I venture to present you with a nobler and a braver way, worthy of the bravest soldiers. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you and humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful buildings, You will give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your houses, you will allow yourself, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them".

"I do claim to be passionate seeker after truth.....in the course of that search, the discovery of non-violence came to me. It spread in my life-mission....I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission."

VI

In the aforesaid pages we have given a general idea about Gandhian philosophy and Gandhian ideology. We shall now describe the ideology under which Jinnah was nurtured and brought up. Jinnah went to England for his legal studies in 1892 when he was barely sixteen years of age. At that time, Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the founders of the Congress was in England. He was then a member of the House of Commons of the British Parliament in the Liberal side. Dadabhai took young Jinnah under his care and naturally Jinnah learnt his first politics from this great master. Jinnah frequented the House of Commons and various political meetings in Dadabhai's company and in this way became imbued with the progressive ideas of the British politics. It may be mentioned here that Gandhiji also met Dadabhai Naoroji during his student-days in London but as there was hardly anything in common between them, no intimacy grew between them. It is, however, interesting to note that in England the future Mahatma showed his interest not in politics or any other progressive activities but in the vegetarian society of London, of which he became an active member.

Returning to India, Jinnah came under the influence of two other Congress stalwarts—Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Gopal-krishna Gokhale. In this way, Jinnah became intimately associated with the Indian National Congress and developed a deep loyalty towards it. Out of this feeling of loyalty, he did not join the Muslim League when it was founded in 1906. After several years when he was persuaded to join it, he did so only with a view to bring the two institutions nearer to each other and ultimately to get them coalesce with each other. That

he greatly succeeded in his attempts was shown by the Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the Congress and the League whereby both these great institutions pledged to work together for Indian freedom. The Lucknow Pact was a great personal triumph for Jinnah in his campaign for Hindu-Muslim unity and Congress-League co-operation. His contribution towards the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity was of such a high order that Gokhale used to call him the best Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.

VII

Gandhiji had returned to India a couple of years before the Lucknow pact between the Congress and the League, but he did not evince any interest in it nor in Jinnah's activities towards the Hindu Muslim unity. His mind was centred in his own ideology and in how to give it a practical shape. From 1915 to 1919, he mainly concerned himself with making some minor experiments with his ideas at Champaran and other places. During this period his interest in Congress politics was lukewarm. He took some part in the Amritsar session of the Congress in 1919. At that time feelings ran high in the Congress over the Jalianwala-bagh massacre but Gandhiji advised caution and restraint. But in the meantime, the Ali Brothers—Mahammad Ali and Shaukat Ali—had started the Khilafat Movement over the Turkish sovereignty and they invited Gandhiji to join their movement and he readily agreed to do so. He plunged into it with a mad frenzy believing that this movement would give him a grand opportunity to make experiments with his own ideas. Under Gandhian leadership, the Khilafat movement gained momentum and spread through the length and breadth of the country and became such a formidable force that the Government itself took fright. Under the auspices of the Khilafat Movement, Gandhiji started his Non-Co-operation movement on the 1st August, 1920. The first non-violent shot was fired in the Gandhian battle and India entered into a new period of her history—the Gandhian period.

Gandhiji seemed to be invincible at the moment. Hindu masses were already at the feet of the Mahatma and his whole-hearted support to Khilafat movement brought the Muslim masses under his banner. Now it was the turn of the intelligentsia to succumb to his charms. Up to this time, the Indian National Congress had nothing to do with the various Gandhian movements which had been started. Gandhiji, however, now directed his attention towards the Congress and wanted to capture the great national institution for the furtherance of his own ideas and to convert it into an instrument of his ideology. His onslaught on the Congress was like a Blitzkrieg and leaders like C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru surrendered to him in no time. In the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December of 1920, the Congress itself surrendered to Gandhiji and adopted the Gandhian programme for its future activities. Henceforth, Gandhiji practically became the Dictator of the Congress. This was a position which was unbearable and unacceptable to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the old guard and the great sentinel of the old Indian National Congress of Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjee and others. He was not prepared to surrender the Congress to Gandhiji without a fight to the last ditch.

Jinnah had no sympathy for the Gandhian ideology and he felt that Gandhiji was taking India to an uncharted sea where everything would end in a disaster. He considered it a catastrophe for India that the Congress should adopt Gandhian programme in preference to those of the old masters of the Congress. He felt that it was suicide for the Congress to adopt the Gandhian path. In the open session of the Congress at Nagpur, Jinnah rose to utter his words of protests against the adoption of the new programme. But he was howled down and he left the Congress in disgust.

In a subsequent letter to Gandhiji Jinnah explained why he could not accept the Gandhian leadership of the Congress :

"I thank you for your kind suggestion offering me to take my share in the new life that has opened up before

the country. If by 'New Life' you mean your methods and your programme, I am afraid I cannot accept them ; for I am fully convinced that it must lead to disaster.....your extreme programme has for the moment struck the imagination mostly of the inexperienced youth and the ignorant and the illiterate. All this means complete disorganisation and chaos. What the consequences of this may be, I shudder to contemplate."

About Jinnah's exit from the Congress after it had passed under Gandhian control, Jawaharlal Nehru, in his autobiography writes as follows:

"...The new developments in the Congress were thoroughly disapproved by him (Jinnah). He disagreed on political grounds—Temperamentally he did not fit in at all with the new Congress. He felt completely out of his element in the Khadi-clad crowd demanding speeches in Hindustani. The enthusiasm of the people outside struck him as mob-hysteria."

VIII

After he left the Congress, the Muslim League became the main platform from which Jinnah propagated his ideas. All his ideas about Swaraj, about Hindu-Muslim unity remained the same. The only change that was noticeable in his speeches was that henceforth he pleaded for some special safeguards for the Muslims in view of their backwardness and because of the huge majority of the Hindus. But at the same time he showed restraint and did not allow the League to adopt any deliberate anti-Congress attitude. From the League platform he wooed the Congress and tried to be a bridge between them. He continued his conciliatory attitude for years till the formation of Provincial Ministries in 1937 under the Government of India Act of 1935. Even during the election stage, the spirit of accommodation between the Congress and the League continued. But when

the election results were out, it was found that the Congress had secured an overwhelming majority. This turned the head of the Congress. Being intoxicated by its spectacular victory, it disdained to take any notice of Jinnah or the League. Further, the activities of the various Congress ministries caused fright, real or imaginary, in the minds of the Muslims. Now began the battle between the Congress and the League and naturally it took a virulent communal turn. Jinnah was on war-path, determined to teach the Congress a good lesson. He made up his mind to take some extreme steps to prevent the hegemony of Gandhi and the Gandhian Congress at least over the Muslim-majority areas of India. He now began to develop his two-nation theory which had been working in his mind for sometime. Then at the Lahore Session of the Muslim League in March, 1940, he made the formal demand for the creation of a home-land for the Muslims where the writ of Gandhi or the Gandhian Congress would not run. Events moved quickly thereafter and Jinnah's demand came to fruition when on the August 15, 1947 two separate independent sovereign states, India and Pakistan, were created by partitioning India.

IX

With the advent of Independence Jinnah got his Pakistan. But what did Gandhiji get? He had not come to India in 1915 merely to fight the battle of Indian freedom. This freedom was to him merely a means to an end—a half-way resting place towards the Utopia of his dream. One would have thought that by right of service his position after the attainment of Independence should have been unique and unassailable. But, it was not so. He no longer had the same commanding position as before but now it was Nehru-Patel combination that wielded the supreme power, though occasionally it made a show of consultation with him out of respect towards him. In the words of Pyarelal—"The impossible old man was put on the pedestal, admired for his genius and unerring hunch, consulted, listened to with respectful attention and bypassed (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase V. 2, p. 33)". In Gandhiji's own words—"Formerly, I

could afford to be monarch of all I surveyed. To-day, I have many fellow-monarchs, if I may still count myself as such. If I can, I am the least among them (Tendulkar V. 8, p. 245)".

Gandhiji's influence had started waning from the time Lord Mountbatten arrived in India. The partition plan of Mountbatten was accepted by Nehru and Patel without any consultation with Gandhiji. In a meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Bombay on the 14th June, 1947, Sardar Patel made a brutally frank speech giving the go-by to the Gandhian ideals of non-violence or Ahimsa. He gave reasons why he could no longer follow the Gandhian ideals. He said—"Freedom was coming. They must build up industries. They must build up the Army and make it efficient and strong." (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase V. 2, p. 255).

Nehru's views also ran on similar lines. He urged for large-scale industrialisation of the country for raising the standard of living of the people. He further said that it was necessary that the background of the West in its worship of the machine and worship of the science and technology must be adopted in India. It was quite clear, therefore, that though the British had quitted India, yet the chance of building up of a Gandhian Utopia was very bleak in view of the open declarations of Nehru and Patel. Gandhiji's position was very anomalous now and it seemed that he had nothing else to do except preaching his ideas in his prayer-meetings. Gandhiji was not prepared to acquiesce in or accept this helpless position. To give up the idea of his Life-Mission was unthinkable to him. He was determined now to take the next step in his programme—to make a way towards a rurally-oriented State whose centre of gravity would lie not in the cities but in villages. He felt that the Congress would no longer be useful to him as it had tasted power and become power-mad. He, therefore, came to the conclusion that the Congress must be done away with, and in its place he would substitute a tried Gandhian organisation which must have full faith in Gandhian ideologies. Gandhiji sketched out his plan in this

respect in his own hands on the night of the 29th January, 1948, less than twenty-four hours before his death. The plan was to disband the great national institution the Indian National Congress and to set up in its place a new organisation called the Lok Sevak Sangh whose steel frame was to consist of the following Gandhian Faithfuls—All-India Spinners Association, All-India Village Industries Association, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh and Go-seva Sangh (Tendulkar, V. 8, p. 283-285).

It is a tragedy even to think of the dissolution of the Indian National Congress which has played a great part in our onward march in time and in our fight for freedom. To see it succeeded by organisations like the All-India Spinners Association, or the Go-seva Sangh would have been a greater tragedy. In this perspective the raising of banner of revolt by Jinnah against Gandhi and Gandhism seems to have been a historical necessity.

We have already seen that both Nehru and Patel refused to apply the Gandhian ideals in the practical administration of the country. Now let us see the reactions of the common man towards them. Gandhiji wanted to make practical experiments with his ideas as to what a model village should be under the Gandhian order. With this end in view he settled in village Sevagram in Wardha district towards the end of his life. The village hummed with all sorts of Gandhian activities during Gandhiji's life-time. Some twelve years after his death, an ardent social worker visited Sevagram and she described the condition of things as she saw them, in the following words (Blossoms in the Dust by Kusum Nair, p. 187):

“In Bapu's time, there used to be a charka in every home at Sevagram. To day, there is not a single spinning-wheel in the whole village. As for basic education of which Sevagram was the centre, they (villagers) say with unconcealed contempt: ‘We do not send our children to the Ashram school beyond the fourth class (i.e. primary), because those who pass out of the Nai Talim cannot get jobs; so our boys go to Wardha Town; they walk four miles

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Gandhiji's influence had started waning from the time Lord Mountbatten arrived in India. The partition plan of Mountbatten was accepted by Nehru and Patel without any consultation with Gandhiji. In a meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Bombay on the 14th June, 1947, Sardar Patel made a brutally frank speech giving the go-by to the Gandhian ideals of non-violence or Ahimsa. He gave reasons why he could no longer follow the Gandhian ideals. He said—"Freedom was coming. They must build up industries. They must build up the Army and make it efficient and strong." (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase V. 2, p. 255).

Nehru's views also ran on similar lines. He urged for large-scale industrialisation of the country for raising the standard of living of the people. He further said that it was necessary that the background of the West in its worship of the machine and worship of the science and technology must be adopted in India. It was quite clear, therefore, that though the British had quitted India, yet the chance of building up of a Gandhian Utopia was very bleak in view of the open declarations of Nehru and Patel. Gandhiji's position was very anomalous now and it seemed that he had nothing else to do except preaching his ideas in his prayer-meetings. Gandhiji was not prepared to acquiesce in or accept this helpless position. To give up the idea of his Life-Mission was unthinkable to him. He was determined now to take the next step in his programme—to make a way towards a rurally-oriented State whose centre of gravity would lie not in the cities but in villages. He felt that the Congress would no longer be useful to him as it had tasted power and become power-mad. He, therefore, came to the conclusion that the Congress must be done away with, and in its place he would substitute a tried Gandhian organisation which must have full faith in Gandhian ideologies. Gandhiji sketched out his plan in this

respect in his own hands on the night of the 29th January, 1948, less than twenty-four hours before his death. The plan was to disband the great national institution the Indian National Congress and to set up in its place a new organisation called the Lok Sevak Sangh whose steel frame was to consist of the following Gandhian Faithfuls—All-India Spinners Association, All-India Village Industries Association, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh and Go-seva Sangh (Tendulkar, V. 8, p. 283-285).

It is a tragedy even to think of the dissolution of the Indian National Congress which has played a great part in our onward march in time and in our fight for freedom. To see it succeeded by organisations like the All-India Spinners Association, or the Go-seva Sangh would have been a greater tragedy. In this perspective the raising of banner of revolt by Jinnah against Gandhi and Gandhism seems to have been a historical necessity.

We have already seen that both Nehru and Patel refused to apply the Gandhian ideals in the practical administration of the country. Now let us see the reactions of the common man towards them. Gandhiji wanted to make practical experiments with his ideas as to what a model village should be under the Gandhian order. With this end in view he settled in village Sevagram in Wardha district towards the end of his life. The village hummed with all sorts of Gandhian activities during Gandhiji's life-time. Some twelve years after his death, an ardent social worker visited Sevagram and she described the condition of things as she saw them, in the following words (Blossoms in the Dust by Kusum Nair, p. 187):

“In Bapu's time, there used to be a charka in every home at Sevagram. To day, there is not a single spinning-wheel in the whole village. As for basic education of which Sevagram was the centre, they (villagers) say with unconcealed contempt: ‘We do not send our children to the Ashram school beyond the fourth class (i.e. primary), because those who pass out of the Nai Talim cannot get jobs; so our boys go to Wardha Town; they walk four miles

to study in a conventional school.....'. They (villagers) say—'We do not want to remain tillers of the soil, for ever. We also want to become lawyers and doctors.'

This is the verdict of the common man, about the Gandhian ideals, after testing their utility by actual practice. This also proves that the Gandhian ideals about village reconstruction were never characterised by clarity and realism. After all, the common man knows where his shoe pinches. Who can say that he is wrong? If we now make an appraisal of the net results of Gandhiji's tremendous activities and of the fruits left by his unceasing toil and travail of soul, we will find that India is not only moving away from the Gandhian path but is definitely repudiating it totally.

X

Did Jinnah really believe in the two-Nation theory on which he put so much emphasis while demanding separate State for the Muslims? Had he any sympathy for communalism? Did he create Pakistan for Muslims alone? Did he want that Muslims and Hindus should live separate in water-tight compartments? Let us examine these questions. On the 7th August, 1947, he left Delhi which was to see him no more. On the 11th August, he made his first speech before the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in which he made the following declaration:

"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens of one State. Now, I think, we should keep that in front of us as our ideal, and you will find that in course of time, Hindus will cease to be Hindus, and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State" (Hector Bolitho's *Life of Jinnah*, p. 197).

The above declaration shows the inner soul of Jinnah's politics. Here is the old Jinnah again, the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. He did not fight the Hindu community as such but his fight was against Gandhi and Gandhi-dominated Congress. He believed in all sincerity that Gandhi had taken the Congress into a wrong path which could lead only to chaos. He found himself in the unfortunate position that not only the ignorant Hindu masses but also the Hindu intelligentsia abdicated their reasoning functions to burn incense at the altar of Gandhism. In these circumstances, no other fighting force was available to him except a communal force. The moment he achieved his aim to create a State where the writ of Gandhi and Gandhian Congress would not run, he threw off the mask of communalism which he had been wearing for the time being.

XI

It is now recognised on all sides that the vivisection of India has been an unmitigated evil for all concerned; it has not only not solved any problem between the Hindus and Muslims, but on the other hand, it has created hundreds of insoluble problems. Every sensible man must repudiate the two-nation theory as Jinnah himself did in his first speech before the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. Where is the validity of the two-nation theory when 90% of the Muslim population, both in India and Pakistan, are of Hindu origin, the descendants of converts from the Hindu fold. Jinnah himself came from a Gujarati Hindu stock. Ethnologically, there is no difference whatsoever between the Hindus and a vast majority of the Muslims; in the same locality, both have the same mother-tongue. We must also remember that there are still fifty or sixty millions of Muslims left in India. Of what benefit partition has been to them? Common people did not want partition. They have no concern with politics. It is they who have suffered most by the partition. They will welcome the annulment of partition with a full heart.

Further, safety of the sub-continent also requires that there should be a re-union. In this respect, Lord Wavell's course of

action deserves special mention. He looked into the question of partition from the defence point of view with the eye of a soldier, and his conclusion was that a partition on a two-nation theory, with all its consequential and concomitant happenings, would dangerously weaken India's defence and lay her open to attack from north and north-west. Bearing this aspect of the question in his mind, he addressed the members of the Central Legislature in the following words:

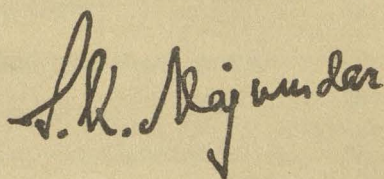
"You cannot alter geography. From the point of view of defence, of relations to the outside world, of many internal and external problems, India is a natural unit. That two communities and even two nations can make arrangements to live together inspite of differing cultures or religions, history provides many examples."

Contemporary history has not been properly appreciative of this gallant soldier-Viceroy who courted dismissal from his exalted office rather than be responsible for splitting up the land, its people and its magnificent Army into two. Nobody, neither Gandhi nor Jinnah nor any other politician saw the evils of partition as clearly as did Lord Wavell.

Events, internal and external, that have happened during the last nineteen years—particularly those in recent months—imperatively demand that Hindus and Muslims of India and Pakistan should again come together. There should be a commonwealth of India and Pakistan with common defence but with full autonomy for all constituent units. There could be reorganisation of constitutional units with mutual consent of India and Pakistan but without any outside interference whatsoever. We have passed through an ordeal of fire and that should chasten us. India is a country of many minority communities and it can say, with all humility, that it has not treated its minorities unfairly. The task of re-union is very difficult on the surface. Yet, it is not impossible as there is abundance of good will among the masses and the common people, both in India and Pakistan. Interests of the masses and the common people should be our

first consideration. Time has now come to make a re-appraisal of our politics. No re-appraisal is possible without self-introspection. It is hoped that this book will turn the mind of the readers—both Hindu and Muslim—towards introspection and re-union. The path of re-union may be 'tortuous, unlit, turning back upon itself'. But let us not be dismayed by the obstacles and let us not lose heart in our search for the promised land. If India and Pakistan combine, if communalism is avoided, the commonwealth of Indo-Pakistan will be one of the strongest powers in the world, which will be in a position to mould the destiny of the world.

Patna
1st Baisakh, 1373
15th April, 1966.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'S. K. Raymunder'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S' and a checkmark-like flourish at the end.

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S. K. Majumdar

CHAPTER I

India's Quest for Freedom Begins

India's quest for freedom and Modernism in India began when Raja Ram Mohun Ray manfully stood, against mighty orthodox opinion, for religious, social, political and educational reforms in the country. His reforming zeal must not be misunderstood. Though he drank deeply from the fountain of western knowledge and western political philosophy, he did not intend to westernise India. He was a great Sanskrit and Persian scholar and wanted a synthesis of Hindu, Muslim and Western cultures. So far as the Hindus were concerned, he wanted them to stick to the path shown by the Vedas and the Upanishads, and to avoid idolatry, superstitions and obscurantisms which had unfortunately accumulated around current popular Hinduism. The monotheistic Brahmo Samaj founded by him is his best memorial. His battle in the educational front was, however, his best gift to posterity.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, during the passage of a bill for renewing the Charter of the East India Company, the British Parliament required the Company to make provision for promotion of knowledge among the inhabitants of Company's territories in India. The Company first decided that education in India should be given in traditional oriental lines and to that end at the first instance established a college at Calcutta for the study of Sanskrit. Ram Mohun Ray vigorously opposed this decision of the Government and urged that education should be propagated on western lines with an emphasis on the scientific subjects. In 1823 he led a deputation of the Anglicists (as those who were in favour of English education were called) to the then Governor-General Lord Amherst with a petition which read as follows:

"The Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if such had

been the policy of the British Legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of education embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy with other useful sciences by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning, educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with the necessary books and apparatus."

Anglicists won the day finally when Macaulay, the newly appointed L w Member of the Governor-General's Council threw his whole weight in their favour by his historic minute, dated February 2, 1835. Then the question arose as to the language in which the higher education should be imparted. On the insistence of the new intelligentsia of those days, the question was answered in favour of English. Thus were laid the foundations of a system of western education which continued for more than a century, conferring immense blessings and benefits upon the people.

The effect of the establishment of English education in India was foreseen by Macaulay even before he came to India. In a memorable speech in the House of Commons during a debate on the renewal of East India Company's Charter in 1833, Macaulay said as follows:

"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; ... that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come, I know not. But never will I attempt to avert it or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history..... The sceptre may pass away from us..... Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws."

Macaulay wanted to bind India and England permanently not on the basis of arms and military conquest but on the basis of universal reason and knowledge envisaging the highest form of freedom. The same noble idea was echoed by Charles Trevelyan, a near relative of Macaulay, in a pamphlet he wrote on 'Education in India' from which the following extract is taken:

"The existing connexion between two such distant countries as England and India, cannot, in the nature of things, be permanent: no effort of policy can prevent the native from ultimately regaining their independence." But there are two ways of arriving at this point. One of these is through the medium of revolution; the other, through that of reform. In one; the forward movement is sudden and violent; in the other, it is gradual and peaceable..... The only means at our disposal for preventing one and securing the other class of results is, to set the natives on a process of European improvement, to which they are already sufficiently inclined..... The change will thus be peaceably and gradually effected; there will be no struggle, no mutual exasperation..... If this course is adopted, there will, properly speaking, be no separation. A precarious and temporary relation will almost imperceptibly pass into another far more durable and beneficial....."

Time, the ultimate arbiter of Truth has completely vindicated the almost prophetic visions of Macaulay and Trevelyan. Dalhousie gave a final shape to the ideas of Raja Ram Mohun Ray, Macaulay and Trevelyan by establishing Universities in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay with the English language as the vehicle of teaching. Knowledge of English opened the treasure of the western ideas to Indian intelligentsia. The use of English language as a medium for imparting higher education had further profound effects, towards the integration and the political progress of the country. Under the impact of English education, a new class of intelligentsia grew up throughout India who imbibed and absorbed British political ideas particularly

those associated with British Liberalism, democracy, responsible government and constitutionalism. The English language, as the vehicle of their common political and legal thought, created a feeling of unity among them though they lived far apart in different parts of the country. They were now looking for a forum in which they could exchange their political ideas which they imbibed from British sources. In this way, they founded the Indian National Congress which became a mighty advance-post for those who were in the quest for freedom of India.

CHAPTER II

Birth of the Indian National Congress (1885)

The Indian National Congress, as it had existed till 1920 before coming under the control of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was the result of impact with the West. It is the finest fruit of the Western ideas that pervaded India in the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth century, the invigorating impact of the dynamic Western civilisation and culture, its technology and methods of science had a very unsettling effect on the Indian way of life but at the same time it broadened the vision of those Indians who took advantage of English education. It is through these English-educated people that the Western ideas of humanism and liberalism got currency in India. As we have said before, the first person to popularise Western ideas in India was Raja Ram Mohun Ray. He was a pioneer not only in the fields of religious, social and educational reforms but in the political field as well. In this last sphere also, it was he who laid the foundation² of public life, as we know it in India today. He was the first Indian to approach the British Parliament for redress of grievances of the people of India. He gave evidence before the Parliamentary Committee set up for the purpose of examining the terms of the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company in 1833. It was due to his efforts that in the Charter of 1833, the following provision was added:

“No native of India nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the Company.”

Raja Ram Mohun Ray was, however, not destined to return to his motherland and he died in Bristol in England in the same year, namely, 1833. The New India that grew thereafter

accepted him and made obeisance to him as the Adi-Guru (First Prophet) of Indian Renaissance and Indian politics. The path shown by him was followed by all nineteenth century Indian politicians.

The Charter of the Company was required to be renewed after every twenty years. Therefore, the next due date for the renewal of the Charter was 1853. Now, the political leaders of Bengal became anxious to form an Association for ventilating the grievances of the people so that the short-comings of the Company's administration might reach the ears of the Parliament. The Association they formed was given the name of British Indian Association. It was founded in 1851 and its moving spirits were Babu Ram Gopal Ghose, Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra and a young journalist Harish Chandra Mukherjee. Harish Chandra may be said to be the Father of modern Indian journalism and his paper, *Hindu Patriot*, was a power in the land. Bombay followed suit. In 1852, Dadabhai Naoroji and Jagannath Sankarseth started the Bombay Association for a similar purpose. Later on were founded the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Madras Mahajan Sabha. As the British Indian Association was controlled by the leading zemindars (landlords) of Bengal and did not quite meet the aspirations of the educated middle classes, necessity was felt for the formation of another political association in Bengal. Thus, the Indian Association was founded in Calcutta in 1876. Its moving spirits were Surendra Nath Banerje, and Ananda Mohan Bose, ably assisted by Man Mohan Ghose, a leading criminal lawyer of Calcutta and Sisir Kumar Ghose, the editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

Very soon after the passing of the Charter Act of 1853, the Sepoy Mutiny occurred in 1857. On its suppression, the East India Company was abolished and the government of the country was assumed directly by the Crown itself. The Board of Control was abolished and its function began to be performed by His Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Queen Victoria signaled her assumption of direct rule by a historic proclamation which ran as follows:

"We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects; and those obligations by the blessings of Almighty God we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

"And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge.

"It is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement and to administer its government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our security and in their gratitude our best reward....."

The Queen's Proclamation went a great way to create an atmosphere of peace and good faith and gradually the British Rule came to be regarded as a dispensation of Providence. Meanwhile, Universities were established in the Presidency towns. Education on European lines that was imparted through these universities exerted a hypnotic influence on the youth of the country. Their first reaction was blind and uncritical acceptance of the Western standards and Western ideas. They read and became enamoured of the liberal ideas preached by Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Burke and Mill and they also became influenced by the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire, the prophets of the French Revolution. Thus, the English-educated Indians became imbued with liberalism with abiding faith in parliamentary institutions. Their reading of the British history convinced them that the country-men of Pym, Hampden, Milton and Burke would not deny them their political rights when time became ripe for establishing parliamentary institutions in India.

But, unfortunately, noble and liberal sentiments expressed in the Queen's Proclamation were never acted upon. With the

growth of immense material prosperity in Britain, the British people began to develop a sense of racial superiority. The banner of Imperialism raised by the Tory Prime Minister Disraeli aggravated this sense. The British felt that they were the chosen people upon whom had fallen the task of ruling the Indians. At the same time, behind the sense of superiority lurked also a sense of fear-complex engendered by the unhappy incidents of the Mutiny of 1857. Lord Lytton was the Viceroy during Disraeli's Premiership. He passed an Arms Act restricting the rights of Indians to carry fire-arms and a Press Act imposing firm government control over the Vernacular newspapers. Over and above these, official measures were taken to throw difficulties in the way of the Indian aspirants for the Indian Civil Service.

The Government of India Act, 1853 had declared that henceforth the recruitment of the officers for the Indian Civil Service was to be made by open competition from which no native of India was to be barred. The first competitive examination was held in 1855. In 1864, Satyendra Nath Tagore entered the Civil Service by open competition; in 1871, three other Bengalee young men did the same. The presence of Indian Officers in the covenanted Civil Service became an eye-sore to the British in India and the Anglo-Indian Press raised a terrific hue and cry. The position of equality with the British rulers which these officers had attained as members of the Indian Civil Service was thought to be undermining the racial prestige upon which the British rule was based. Sir Ashley Eden, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal wrote a letter on the 8th March, 1877, to the Government of India on the subject. He wrote that it must be recognised as a mistake that Indians were at all allowed to compete for and enter the covenanted Civil Service and this mistake must be set right immediately. Conservative politicians of England were also alarmed. The then Secretary of State for India, the Duke of Argyle, pointed out to the Government of India: "It should never be forgotten and there should never be any hesitation in laying down the principle that it is one of our first duties to the people of

India to guard the safety of our own dominion.....and the maintenance and stability of our rule must ever be kept in view as the basis of our policy, and to this end a large proportion of British functionaries in the more important posts seem essential." Thereafter, Lord Salisbury, who succeeded the Duke of Argyll as the Secretary of State for India, lowered the age-limit for the candidates for the Indian Civil Service examination. Marks allotted to Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian were also considerably reduced in comparison to Greek, Latin and other European languages. These steps were taken solely with a view to exclude Indian candidates from the examination. These retrograde steps were taken in spite of official statements and royal proclamations promising Indian equal opportunities in government service. Sir John Strachey, one of the most distinguished members of the Indian Civil Service, frankly wrote as follows: "..... let there be no hypocrisy about our intention to keep in the hands of our own people those executive posts... on which, our political and military power, our actual hold of the country depends."

Another incident helped to bring the nationalistic feelings to a head. Lord Ripon who succeeded the reactionary Lord Lytton as the Viceroy of India was a Liberal Statesman of the Gladstone school. He made sincere attempts to liberalise the government. His Government introduced a Bill in the old Imperial Legislative Council in 1883 which came to be known as the Ilbert Bill after the name of its framer Sir Courtenay Ilbert, the Law Member of the Viceroy's Council. This Bill was designed to remove a judicial disability under which Indian members of the Indian Civil Service lay. Outside Presidency towns, none but judicial officers who were both Justices of the Peace and European British subjects could try criminal cases brought against European British subjects. As Indian members of the Indian Civil Service were now moving up into the higher grades of the judiciary, Lord Ripon thought it fit to remove this judicial disability from which they suffered. He felt that there was no reason why these high Indian judicial officers should not preside at any trial regardless of the

nationality of the accused. This Bill gave rise to a furious agitation on the part of the European community who regarded it as an encroachment on their prerogative. In the words of Sir Ashley Eden "it excited a fierce and more perilous conflict of races than was witnessed in the Mutiny of 1857." Lord Ripon was denounced by the European residents of Calcutta at a public meeting held in the Town Hall. Their racial feeling was so much excited that, it was reported, a section of them bound themselves "to overpower the sentries at the Government House, to put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal-ghat, and to deport him to England."

The Government of India bowed down to the European agitation and the original Bill was emasculated and toned down. The attitude of the European Community and the virtual withdrawal of the Bill produced a bitter feeling of disappointment in the minds of the educated Indians who were encouraged, by the British tradition and by the pronouncements of the liberal-minded British statesmen, to look forward to the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and ultimately to full self-government. The outburst of the racial passion and the racial bias on the part of the European community showed that liberation from British domination was not possible without a bitter struggle.

At this juncture, a very distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Alan Octavius Hume, came on the scene. He was resolved to open a safety-valve for the Indian unrest. After serving the Government of India for thirty years, he now dedicated himself to serve the Indian people. He believed that the British bureaucracy was out of touch with the people and maintained that it was "of paramount importance to find an overt and constitutional channel for discharge of the increasing ferment which had resulted from western ideas and education." Acting upon this belief Hume conceived the idea of bringing into existence a national gathering of Indians and with that end in view addressed a soul-stirring letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University on the 1st March, 1883.

This letter urged them to form an association for the mental, moral and political regeneration of India. He asked only for fifty men, good and true, men of unselfishness, moral courage, self-control and active spirit of benevolence. Here are some extracts from that memorable letter: "... if the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures, or so selfishly wedded to personal concerns that they dare not strike a blow for their country's sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on, for they deserve nothing better. Every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then,..... at present at any rate all hopes of progress are at end and India truly neither desires nor deserves any better government than she enjoys... Let there be no more complaining of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are,... then rightly are these preferred to you, rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and task-masters they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders ever so sorely, until you realise and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."

In the meantime Surendra Nath Banerjee was also very active. We have mentioned before that in 1876 in collaboration with Ananda Mohan Bose he founded a political body called the Indian Association. Next year Surendra Nath attended the Delhi Durbar where there was a large assemblage of the princes and the people of India. It is said that the Delhi Durbar gave him the inspiration of forming an All-India Political Assembly which would bring popular representatives from

all parts of the country on a common platform—a step which was bound to lead to the emotional integration of the whole of India and pave the way towards the formation of an Indian Nation. Thereafter he made a whirlwind tour of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies to propagate his ideas. There was great response to Surendra Nath's propaganda and when in 1883 Surendra Nath convened a conference called the Indian National Conference at Calcutta, every part of India was represented in it. Late Ambica Charan Majumdar, who was present at the Conference and later on became President of the Indian National Congress wrote as follows in his book 'Indian National Evolution': "It was a unique spectacle, of which the writer of these pages still retains a vivid impression, of immense enthusiasm and earnestness which throughout characterised the three-days' session of the Conference and at the end of which everyone present seemed to have received a new light and a novel inspiration." In this way, the path was being cleared for an All-India political organisation.

Meanwhile Mr. Hume also was working in his own way. He was anxious to enlist the sympathy of Lord Dufferin who had succeeded Lord Ripon as the Viceroy. Mr. Hume met the Viceroy in the early part of 1885 and explained to him the dangers of the Indian situation and pointed out the paramount importance of finding an overt and constitutional channel for the expression of Indian discontent. Lord Dufferin took great interest in the matter and after pondering over it for sometime gave the opinion that there was no body of persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's Opposition did in England, and it would be in the interest of the ruler as well as of the ruled that the Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved.

For Mr. Hume this interview with Lord Dufferin finally settled the issue and he now took the initiative to give a concrete shape to his ideas. A circular was issued by him to the following effect:

A Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December, 1885. The Conference will be composed of delegates—leading politicians well-acquainted with the English language—from all parts of Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies. The direct objects of the Conference would be (i) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of the national progress to become personally known to each other; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

Thereafter Mr. Hume proceeded to England and organised a Committee of influential people who were sympathetic to Indian aspirations. The prominent members of this Committee were John Bright, Henry Fawcett and Charles Bradlaugh.

Towards the end of the year, he returned to make preparations for his proposed Conference to be held during Christmas. The said Conference could not, however, be held at Poona as some sporadic cases of cholera occurred there. Instead it was held at Bombay. When the Conference opened on the morning of the 27th December, 1885, it was found that the leading representatives of the Indian Nation were present and the Conference was given the name of the Indian National Congress. In the first session of the Congress, the first spokesman was Alan Octavius Hume who may be called the Father and the Founder of the Congress. Dadabhai Naoroji, Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, Byramji Malabari and Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar represented Bombay. Mahadev Govinda Ranade, the then judge of the Small Cause Court, Poona and later on a judge of the Bombay High Court, attended as a sympathiser. Madras was represented by P. Rangiah Naidu, the President of the Madras Mahajan Sabha, S. Subramania Iyer, P. Ananda Charlu, G. Subramaniam Iyer, M. Vira-Raghavachariar and P. Kesava Pillai. From Calcutta came W. C. Bonnerjee, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Narendra Nath Sen, the editor of the *Indian Mirror*. Lucknow sent Ganga Prasad Varma. W. C. Bonnerjee presided over this august Assembly and thus became the First President of the Indian National Congress.

Besides Alan Octavius Hume, there were other noble-minded Englishmen who were equally anxious to help the cause of the Indian National Congress. The foremost among them was Sir William Wedderburn a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service and a judge of the Bombay High Court. After retirement from the Bench, he dedicated his whole life to the cause of the Indian National Congress and twice became its President. Another name which must be mentioned in connection with the first session of the Indian National Congress is that of Mr. Wordsworth, who was then Principal of the Elphinstone College, Bombay. Before the First Congress actually met in its open session, there was a private meeting at the house of Mr. Wordsworth where the Congress leaders and Sir William Wedderburn were also present. The Resolutions that were moved in the open session of the Congress were settled at this private meeting.

The debt of the Indian National Congress to Alan Octavius Hume must never be forgotten. He was a great believer in Anglo-Indian friendship. He was firmly convinced that the interests of the Indian people and the British people were essentially the same and he believed that the administration of India within the British Empire (the idea of British Commonwealth was unknown in those days) might be conducted with equal benefit to East and West, developing all that was best in the two great branches of the Aryan race.

But, unfortunately, the hope of Hume that the Indian National Congress would cement the friendship of India and England did not materialise. There were not many among the British Officials who possessed the liberal views of Hume. The majority of the British officials were narrow-minded and chauvinistic and they were determined to keep down India and to injure the cause of the Indian National Congress by dubbing it as a disloyal body. However, the seed that was thus sown by Hume and others ultimately grew into a mighty tree and became the dominant political organisation of the country.

CHAPTER III

The Background of Moslem Politics in India (1857-1906)

The Moslems of undivided India comprised about one-fifth of its whole population. Except in the Punjab and some other parts of Northern India, where there are many descendants of the old Moslem conquerors, the majority of the Moslems in India consisted chiefly of converted Hindus, most of whom accepted Islam as a way of escape from the tyranny of the upper castes in the hierarchy of the Hindu caste-system. The converts, however, lived peacefully with their Hindu brethren. As a matter of fact, so far as the masses are concerned, Hindu and Mahomedan masses were hardly distinguishable from each other and there were rarely any communal quarrels between them. It is an irony of fate that Hindu-Muslim quarrel that besmeared the face of India in the first half of the twentieth century was started by the intelligentsia, for loaves and fishes of office and power.

In the first war of Indian Independence, generally called the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the leading Muslim families of Northern India took a leading part to oust the British from the country. The shadow Moghul Emperor at Delhi, in spite of his weakness and unwillingness, was made the spear-head of the revolt against the British. It is, therefore, no wonder that, after the Mutiny, the anger of the British Rulers fell more upon the Moslems than upon the Hindus. The upper classes of Moslems in Northern India were suppressed and repressed on all sides far more than the Hindus were, and they retired into their shells. They clung to their old ways of life and took no interest, in Western education while the Hindus took full advantage of the facilities of educational institutions on western lines that were, in the meantime, established in various parts of the country. The consequence was that a new Hindu middle class arose whose youths monopolised all Gov-

ernment services and professional careers, while a middle class was completely absent among the Moslems. The avoidance of English education by the Moslems, their keeping away from trade and industry and their adherence to feudal ways were responsible for the absence of a Moslem middle class. Consequently, the Moslems remained backward in education and political influence as well as in the economic field.

But fortunately, in these dark days of the Indian Moslems, a great leader arose among them. He was Sir Syed Ahmed, the founder of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, which later on developed into the Aligarh University. It was he who turned the mind of the Moslem youth towards English education. He was anxious that the educated Moslem youth should be in the good books of the Government and, therefore, he advised them to keep aloof from politics and to rely implicitly upon the good will and good faith of the British Government. When the Indian National Congress began to develop nationalistic ideas and to be critical of the Government, Sir Syed Ahmed advised his co-religionists to keep aloof from the Congress. It was his deliberate opinion that time was not yet ripe for the Moslems to go to any opposition to the British authorities as he required help and co-operation from the British in his educational programme for the Moslem youth. The British staff of the Aligarh College, associated with the Government circles, fostered an anti-national and anti-Congress atmosphere at Aligarh. In this way, a new class of Moslem intelligentsia came into existence who were imbued with anti-national and separatist tendencies. In spite of the establishment of the Aligarh College, the spread of education among the Muslims was slow and the Hindu middle class was still far ahead in education and still monopolised the offices under the Government and the various professional careers. Consequently, there was deep-seated jealousy in the heart of the educated Moslem youth against their Hindu brethren. The wily British officials fully exploited this natural jealousy on the part of the Muslim youth to what they considered their own advantage.

It must be clearly understood that Sir Syed Ahmed was in no way anti-Hindu or communally minded. He used to say that 'the Hindus and the Mussalmans were the two eyes of Mother India and either without the other would deface the Mother's countenance. On another occasion he said, "Remember that the words 'Hindu' and 'Mahomedan' are only meant for religious distinction—otherwise all persons whether Hindu or Mahomedan, even the Christians who reside in this country are all in this particular respect belonging to the same nation."

Though the Indian National Congress was meant to represent all classes of Indian people, irrespective of race or creed, it did not get any support from that class of Mussalmans who drew their inspiration from Aligarh. But those who were not under the influence of Aligarh, joined the Congress whole-heartedly. Amongst the latter class were Badruddin Tyabji and Rahimatullah Md. Sayani, both of whom rose to be Presidents of the Congress, and young Mahammad Ali Jinnah than whom a more ardent Congress-man was difficult to find even among the rank of the Hindus. But because of the influence of Aligarh, communal consciousness and feeling of separateness were engendered in the minds of Muslim youth. Unfortunately, the officials also followed the policy of 'Divide and Rule.' The partition of Bengal of 1905 was the result of a deliberate official policy to create a province with a Muslim majority with a view to give a political push to the Moslems and to keep them well-disposed to the British rulers.

A stormy agitation by Bengalee Hindus followed the announcement of the Partition of Bengal and as a retaliatory measure against the Government, attempts were made to boycott British goods. It was thought prudent by the Government to make some concession to the popular clamour and the Morely-Minto Reforms followed. These Reforms were used by the Government to drive a further wedge between the Hindus and the Mahomedans. Under its inspiration, a few months before the announcement of the Reforms, on October 1, 1906, a deputation of Mahomedans under the leadership of the late Aga Khan waited on the Viceroy, Lord Minto, and demanded separate

electorate for the Mahomedans and the Viceroy declared his willing assent to the said demand. The Anglo-Indian supporters of the Muslim demand were very glad at the reply given by the Viceroy to the deputation. Lady Minto (in her Diary) describes this reply as —‘nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.’

The Muslims had no separate political association in the 19th century. The Mahomedan Educational Conference, founded by Sir Syed Ahmed, was the only progressive association for the Muslims in India. It eschewed politics altogether. After the Partition of Bengal was effected, a meeting of the Mahomedan Educational Conference was held towards the end of 1906 at Dacca, the capital of the newly created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Prominent Mussalmans who were present in this meeting were Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, Hakim Ajmal Khan of Delhi, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk of Aligarh. On the conclusion of the Educational Conference, they held a further meeting and decided to form a separate association styled ‘The All-India Muslim League’ for the Mussalmans alone. The avowed objects of the League were as follows:—

(Jinnah by M. H. S., p. 53):

- (a) to promote among the Mussalmans of India the feeling of loyalty to the British Government and remove any misconception that may arise as to the intentions of the Government with regard to any of its measures;
- (b) to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussalmans of India, and respectfully to represent their needs and aspirations to the Government; and,
- (c) to prevent the rise among the Mussalmans of India of any feeling of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the other objects of the League.

The Morley-Minto scheme of Reforms was finally given shape in the Indian Councils Act of 1909, and this Act not only

created a separate electorate for the Muslims, but contained a device which enabled Moslems to obtain more seats in the various Councils (weightage it was called) than their population in the country warranted. The Aga Khan, who was instrumental in securing separate electorate for the Muslims, gave the following advice to the representatives elected to the new Councils under separate electorate as to the attitude they should adopt in the Council:

“In the first place they must co-operate as representative Indian citizens with other Indians in advancing the well-being of the country by working whole-heartedly for the spread of education, for the promotion of commerce and industry, for the improvement of agriculture by establishment of co-operative credit and distribution societies, and for the development of the natural resources of India. Here, indeed, is a wide field of work for Hindus and Mahomedans acting together

..... And then our representatives must watch and promote social measures required exclusively for the benefit of their Moslem co-religionists, with the co-operation, we hope, of the Hindu members, for we too have needs that are not known to them and which we alone can fully understand.”

At this period another great leader of the Moslems was gradually pushing his way to the forefront. He was no other than Mahammad Ali Jinnah, who was destined to play a historical role in Indian politics.

CHAPTER IV

Mahammad Ali Jinnah : Early Days in Indian Politics— Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity.

Mahammad Ali Jinnah was born on the Christmas day, the 25th December, 1876, at Karachi in a merchant family of Khoja sect. The family descended from Gujarati Hindu stock of Kathiawar. He was educated at Karachi and Bombay. He left for England in 1892 to study Law and joined the Lincoln's Inn and was called to the Bar in 1897. After returning to India, he joined the Bombay High Court.

While Jinnah was in England, he came into intimate contact with Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, who was a Liberal Member of the British Parliament at the time. He had his political lessons at the feet of Dadabhai with whom he frequented the House of Commons and various gatherings of the British Liberal politicians. In this way, politics and Liberalism became part of his life. His ambition to become a great Parliamentarian dates back from the days of his youth in England.

His first three years at the Bar were days of great hardship. Financial hardships compelled him to accept a Presidency Magistrateship in 1900. He, however, resigned after a short period of service, and reverted to the Bar. As a Magistrate he had shown a very sound knowledge of criminal law and his success at the Bar was soon assured. Relieved from financial anxiety, he now turned his attention to politics. As he was nurtured in England in Liberalism, he naturally joined this school of politics which was led by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale as opposed to the extremist school of politics led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In 1906, Dadabhai Naoroji came down from England to preside over the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress. Jinnah attended the Congress as a delegate and acted as Private Secretary to the President.

Jinnah took no interest in the founding of the Muslim League and for a number of years he took no interest in its deliberations. He confided himself to his professional work and to his duties as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council to which he was elected in 1909. It is remarkable that the first speech he made in the Council was in support of Gandhiji's activities in South Africa during a debate regarding the plight of Indians in South Africa. The following is an extract from the proceedings of the Imperial Legislative Council;

The Hon'ble Mr. M. A. Jinnah:

..... My Lord, if I may say so at the outset, it is a most painful question—a question which has roused the feelings of all classes in this country to the highest pitch of indignation and horror at the harsh and cruel treatment that is meted out to Indians in South Africa.

The President (Lord Minto, the Viceroy):

I must call the Hon'ble gentleman to order. I think that is rather too strong a word 'cruelty.' The Hon'ble Member must remember that he is talking of a friendly part of the Empire, and he really must adapt his language to the circumstances.

The Hon'ble Mr. Jinnah:

Well, My Lord, I should feel inclined to use much stronger language, but I am fully aware of the constitution of this Council, and I do not wish to trespass for one single moment; but I do say this, that the treatment that is meted out to the Indians is the harshest which can possibly be imagined, and, as I said before, the feeling in this country is unanimous.

Up to this date, no one has dared to speak in such courageous manner in the face of the Viceroy in the Council. Naturally his speech was reported throughout the country in the Press and overnight it was recognised that a forceful voice had come in the Council on the popular side. Henceforth he had a

good press all over India and his speeches and political activities were always news in the press.

When Jinnah entered the Imperial Legislative Council, Gokhale was the most prominent among the non-official members. Young Jinnah attached himself to Gokhale. The Gokhale-Jinnah combination became a formidable force in the Council and formed the real Opposition. Both of them liked and trusted each other and both of them worked in union for the upliftment of the country. Mrs. Sorojini Naidu, in her book 'Ambassador of Unity' has said that Jinnah used to say that it was his ambition to follow in the footsteps of Gokhale.

In 1910, an attempt was made by the British officials to introduce communal electorates in District Boards, Municipalities and other local bodies. In the Allahabad session of the Congress of that year over which Sir William Wedderburn presided, Mr. Jinnah moved the resolution condemning further extension of the principle of separate electorates to the local bodies. It is interesting to note that the resolution moved on the subject by Jinnah was seconded by another distinguished Moslem leader, Mazaharul Haque. When at the conclusion of the sitting of the Congress, Sir William Wedderburn convened a conference of the leaders of both the communities for promoting goodwill between them, Jinnah took a very active part in its deliberations. Though the conference did not yield any tangible result immediately, yet Jinnah's efforts in this respect were appreciated on all sides.

We have said before that Jinnah did not join the Muslim League at its inception. But when he made a great name for himself as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, great pressure was put upon him by his co-religionists to join the League and ultimately he joined it in 1913. As soon as he joined the League he made his impact felt there as he tried to bring its aims in a line with the Congress ideals. Very soon the League declared its ideals as—

“Attainment under the aegis of the British Crown of a system of self-government suitable to India through

constitutional means, by bringing about, among others, a steady reform of the existing system of administration by promoting national unity, by fostering public spirit among the people of India, and by co-operation with other communities for the said purpose."

(Jinnah by M. H. S., p. 84).

It is said that the actual credit for roping in Jinnah to the Muslim League belonged to Mahammad Ali and Wazir Hasan. His enrolment as a member of the Muslim League is described by Sarojini Naidu in the following words:

"... Jinnah formally enrolled himself as a member of the All-India Muslim League, to whose expanded outlook he had already contributed so signally by his example. Typical of his exquisite, if somewhat exigent sense of honour, is to find that even so simple an incident partook of something like a sacrament. His two sponsors were required to make a solemn preliminary covenant that loyalty to the Muslim League and the Muslim interest would in no way and at no time imply even the shadow of disloyalty to the larger national cause, to which his life was dedicated." (p. 11, Md. Ali Jinnah, an Ambassador of Unity).

In the very year in which he joined the Muslim League, he made it pass the following resolution (Jinnah by M. H. S., p. 85):

"The All-India Muslim League places on record its firm belief that the future development and the progress of the people of India depend on the harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities and hopes that leaders of both sides will periodically meet together to find a modus operandi for joint and concerted action in questions of public good."

His services in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and his efforts to bring the Congress and the League together were much appreciated all over the country among all sections of

the people. Gokhale paid him glowing tributes in the following words:

“He has true stuff in him and that freedom from all sectarian prejudice which will make him the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.” (Jinnah by M. H. S., p. 86)

After he joined the Muslim League formally, the antagonism, if any, between the Congress and the League began to vanish. Goodwill shown by the League in its abovementioned resolution was immediately reciprocated by the Congress. In the Karachi session of the Congress in 1913 which was presided over by Nawab Syed Mahammad, a resolution was moved by Bhupendra Nath Basu thanking the Muslim League for recognising the principle that the future development and progress of the people of India depended on the harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities. In accordance with the desire of the leaders of both the communities, on the inspiration of Jinnah, it was decided that both the Congress and the League should hold their annual session at Bombay in 1915. The President-elect of the Congress was Sir S. P. Sinha (afterwards Lord Sinha) and that of the League was Mr. Mazaharul Haque of Behar. There was so much communal cordiality at these sessions of the Congress and League that Maulana Mahammad Ali humourously wrote: (p. 120, M. H. Saiyid's Jinnah).

“So rapid has been the progress of the Mussalmans that a mildewed critic from among their own community observed that Lord Sinha ... had travelled by the same train as his Bihari neighbour and brother-lawyer who presided over the Muslim League, and the two had borrowed one another's Presidential addresses in order to compare notes. But .. the two Presidents forgot to take back their own productions, and by an irony of fate Maulana Mazaharul Haque had read to his Muslim audience as his own the pungent oration characteristic of the Bengalee, and Lord Sinha had done likewise and read to the Congress delegates the cautious and halting address of the ever loyal Muslim.”

Both the Congress and the League ended their sessions at Bombay with a happy and cordial feeling to each other after deciding that their next annual sessions would be held at Lucknow. A mandate was given to the Congress in its Bombay session that it should formulate, in concert with the Muslim League, a scheme of self-government for India. Next year (1916), both the Congress and the League held their sessions at Lucknow. Babu Ambica Charan Majumdar presided over the Congress and Mr. Jinnah over the League. In accordance with the mandate given by the Congress, the Congress and the League leaders had previously met in a conference to iron out the difference between the Congress and the League and to present a scheme of irreducible minimum of reforms that would be acceptable to both. Jinnah was the spokesman on behalf of the League in the conference. The result of the conference was presented to the open session of the Congress with the following speech from Surendra Nath Banerjee who presided over the conference: (The story of My Life by M. R. Jayakar, p. 156):

“I had the honour of presiding over the deliberations of the Conference and I will say this, on behalf of the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League, that throughout they exhibited a spirit of compromise, of sweet reasonableness, which, to my mind, constitutes the most valuable qualification for self-government. The spirit of compromise was conspicuous in our deliberations. The scheme is before you, and it is a crowning testimony to the growing unity of feeling between Hindus and Muslims. Today the leaders of the Mahomedan community have joined the Congress. Three cheers for them. They have received us with open arms.....”

In his Presidential speech at the Lucknow session of the Muslim League, Jinnah exhorted upon his audience to act in co-operation with the Hindus for the political upliftment of the country. The words used by him were as follows (Jinnah by M. H. S., p. 131)):

“Towards the Hindus our attitude should be of goodwill and brotherly feelings. Co-operation to the cause of our motherland should be our guiding principle. India’s real progress can only be achieved by a true understanding and harmonious relations between the two great sister communities.”

The Lucknow sessions of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League ended with the Congress-League Agreement which passed down to history as “Lucknow Pact.” The hopeful atmosphere it created is described by Mr. M. R. Jaykar as follows: (Story of My Life, p. 160 Vol. I.)

“... The achievement of Lucknow Pact was a memorable event. It showed that the Hindus and the Moslems could unite to make a common political demand on the British Government. Vital concessions were made to Muslim sentiments. Confining our attention to the three main demands of the Muslims, viz., separate electorates, extent of Muslim representations and safeguards, the Pact conceded that adequate provision should be made for the representation of important minorities by election and the Muslims should be represented through special electorates.”

The compromise at Lucknow was possible only because Mr. Jinnah and other Muslim leaders made it clear that they wanted separate electorates and other safeguards only as a temporary measure to make up for the present backwardness of the Muslims and they hoped that a time would come when these special measures will no longer be necessary for them. Later on, when Jinnah gave evidence before the Parliamentary Committee that was set up for considering the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, Jinnah expressed the same view as will be apparent from the answers which Mr. Jinnah gave to the questions of Major Ormsby-Gore M. P. of the said Committee (Story of My Life by M. R. Jayakar, p. 161):

Major Ormsby-Gore M. P. — You said, you spoke from the point of view of India? You speak really as an Indian Nationalist?

Mr. Jinnah — I do.

Major Ormsby-Gore — That is to say that at the earliest possible moment you wish to do away in political life with any distinction between Mahomedan and Hindu?

Mr. Jinnah — Yes, nothing will please me more than when that day comes.

Another happy feature of the Lucknow Congress was that split between the Moderates and the Extremists started at the Surat Congress of 1907 was healed up at Lucknow. Both sides felt that time had come to lay aside their differences and to obliterate the old divisions. It surprised many that Lokmanya Tilak himself took a prominent part in bringing about the Pact between the Hindus and the Mahomedans.

Pandit Jagat Narayan, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress, described the happy achievements of Lucknow in the following words:

“The present year will be a memorable one in the history of our political evolution. For the first time, since the unfortunate split at Surat, we witness the spectacle of a united Congress.

“The Conference (joint conference of the Congress and the League leaders) had marked a great step forward in our political evolution and disclosed a substantial identity of views between Hindus and Mahomedans.”

CHAPTER V.

Return of Gandhiji from South Africa (1915)

On the 9th January, 1915, a high-souled son of India returned home after twenty years' absence in South Africa where he had achieved great name and fame by fighting for the honour of his countrymen there. This great son of India was no other than Gandhiji himself. He went there in 1894 on professional duties as a lawyer. It was his intention to return to India after finishing his professional work there. But the pitiable conditions under which the Indian immigrants in South Africa lived roused his feeling and he decided to stay on to ameliorate the conditions of his countrymen there. There, the Indians were not permitted to travel without a pass, were not allowed to walk at night freely, nor allowed to travel in I or II classes of railways. They were excluded from public parks and were also subjected to various other unspeakable indignities. In short, they were treated more like cattle than human beings. Gandhiji became determined to fight heroically on behalf of his countrymen there. First of all, he tried legal and constitutional methods of moving the Government of India and the British Government. But all his efforts ended in failure.

Then Gandhiji felt that the time had come for some heroic action and he started his great Passive Resistance Movement. It attracted world-wide notice. It must be said to the credit of Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, that he openly expressed his sympathy with the Indians in South Africa and supported Gandhiji as far as it was consistent with his official position in India. He also conferred on Gandhiji Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal for Public Services.

On his arrival at Bombay, Gandhiji was accorded a right royal reception from all sides. Mr. Jinnah did not lag behind

in paying his respects to Gandhiji. In a Gujarati gathering, Jinnah, immaculately dressed in English clothes, made a fine speech in English welcoming him to motherland while Gandhiji, wearing typical Gujrati dress, made his reply in Gujrati. He even ventured to mildly admonish the previous speakers for speaking in English in a Gujarati gathering. Everyone laughed and the speakers took the admonition in right spirit. On this matter, Gandhiji, later on, wrote as follows:

"This meeting emboldened me to think that I should not find it difficult to place my new-fangled notions before my countrymen." (p. 456, Gandhiji's autobiography).

Gandhiji came to India with some definite aims and with a definite plan of action to achieve them. He really started his campaign in India with this speech. It was his first hit to the Indian politicians who had been too much westernized. He had no faith in these leaders who, in his opinion, had no root in the heart of masses. He learnt by experience that the masses are the ultimate sources of power. Leadership through mass-movement was his Master-Plan. Whatever he said or did from the very first day of landing in India was calculated to achieve this aim. He never lost sight of it. One of the tactics of his campaign was to banish the use of English language from India and this tactics was bound to destroy the leadership of the English-speaking intelligentsia. He felt that these leaders had westernized India too much and time had now come to Indianise the Indians and to turn them away from Western ideas and Western civilisation. But it is however curious to note that Gandhiji's ideas on Non-Co-operation were not indigenous but they were derived from distinguished European and American writers. He got his Sarvodaya ideals from John Ruskin and ideas about Passive Resistance and Civil Disobedience of laws from Tolstoy and Thoreau.

Gandhiji had the greatest respect for Gokhale of all the Indian politicians. More than anybody else, it was Gokhale who induced him to return to India after finishing his noble work in South Africa. In his autobiography Gandhiji has said—"I had

approached India in the ardent hope of merging myself in him."

It was indeed a great tragedy for India as well as for Gandhiji that Gokhale died in February, 1915, within a few weeks of Gandhiji's arrival in India. Gandhiji came to India imbued with the revolutionary ideas contained in Tolstoy's and John Ruskin's writings. Idealism and enthusiasm generated in him by those ideas required some control in view of the peculiar conditions prevailing in India. The only Indian politician who could control and correct Gandhiji's ideas was Gokhale. Much of Gandhiji's errors of judgment and Himalayan blunders could be avoided if Gokhale had been living to guide him. Perhaps Gokhale would have been a connecting link between Gandhiji and Jinnah. The formidable Trio of Gokhale, Gandhiji and Jinnah would have been an ideal Triumvirate for the salvation of India. But it was not to be. Fate willed otherwise.

As Gandhiji himself said that he came to India in the ardent hope of merging himself in Mr. Gokhale, he naturally went to Poona, the headquarters of the Servants of India Society, over which Gokhale presided. It was Gandhiji's intention to be a member of the Society. With a view to familiarise himself with its work, he stayed there for some time. When Gandhiji and the members of the Society were thus thrown together, the latter came to the conclusion that Gandhiji would be a complete misfit in the society. There was a wide difference of opinion between them as to the ideals and the methods of work to be followed. They found themselves at poles asunder in various vital matters and the members felt that to allow Gandhiji an entry into the Society would imperil the very objects for which it was founded. From the following extracts of Gandhiji's autobiography, it seems that Gokhale was not inclined to disagree with the conclusions of the members in this respect: (at p. 457-458):

"I went to Poona ... Gokhale and members of the Servants of India Society overwhelmed me with affection. ... I had a frank talk with them all on every sort of subject. Gokhale was very keen that I should join the So-

ciety, and so was I. But the members felt that, as there was a great difference between my ideals and methods of work and theirs, it might not be proper for me to join the Society. Gokhale believed that, in spite of my insistence on my principles, I was equally ready and able to tolerate theirs. But, he said, the members of the Society have not yet understood your readiness for compromise. They are tenacious of their principles and quite independent. I am hoping that they will accept you, but if they don't you will not for a moment think that they are lacking in respect or love for you. They are hesitating to take any risk: lest their high regard for you should be jeopardised. But whether you are formally admitted as a member or not, I am going to look upon you as one."

Thereafter, Gandhiji went to Tagore's Santiniketan at Bolpur. Gokhale died almost immediately after. On hearing the death-news, Gandhiji hurried back to Poona. After the Sradh ceremony was over, Gandhiji began to woo the members and tried to dispel their fears about himself. But the dissenting members were adamant in their opposition to Gandhiji who ultimately withdrew his application for membership.

Gandhiji writes in his autobiography (pp. 466-67):

"Gokhale took from me a promise that I should travel in India for gaining experience, and express no opinion on public questions until I have finished the period of probation ...

"Gokhale used to laugh at some of my ideas ... and say 'after you have stayed a year in India, your views will correct themselves,'"

With all his appreciations about Gandhiji's asceticism and selfless work, Gokhale was somewhat uneasy about Gandhiji's future activities in India. He had a premonition that Gandhiji would attempt a revolution in India. Jayakar met Gokhale few days before his death and they had a talk about Gandhiji.

Gokhale said that he felt that 'this personality is going to play a great part in the future history of India.' But, he added—

"Mark my words. You are much younger than I am. I may not live to see the day, but I visualise it clearly before me, that Gandhi is going to be in the vanguard of a great movement when some of us are gone. Remember, that on occasions when the passions of the people have to be raised to great heights of emotions and sacrifice or to be brought into close vision of high ideals, Gandhi is an admirable leader. There is something in him which at once enchains the attention of the poor man and he establishes, with a rapidity which is his own, an affinity with the lowly and the distressed.

"But, be careful, that India does not trust him on occasions where delicate negotiations have to be carried on with care and caution and where restraint and tact will make for success, acting on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. He has done wonderful work in South Africa, he has welded the different sections of Indians into one patriotic and united community, but I fear that when the history of the negotiations, which it was his privilege to carry on at one stage, is written with impartial accuracy, it will be found that his actual achievements were not as meritorious as is popularly imagined." (Story of My Life by M. R. Jayakar, p. 317, Vol. I).

... Gandhiji's next task was to find a suitable place for an Asram for himself and the band of faithful followers he had brought from South Africa. His final choice fell upon Sabarmati, near Ahmedabad. Gandhiji gave the following reasons for founding his Asram there: (Gandhiji's autobiography, p. 482).

"I had a predilection for Ahmedabad. Being a Gujarati, I thought I should be able to render the greatest service to the country through Gujarati language. And then, as Ahmedabad was an ancient centre of handloom

weaving, it was likely to be the most favourite field for the revival of the cottage industry of handspinning. There was also the hope that, the city being the capital of Gujarat, monetary help from its wealthy citizens would be more available here than elsewhere."

Very soon he acquired two newspapers, *Young India* and *Navajiban*. In these papers he preached his doctrines of Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Non-violence and Swadesi. His articles on Swadesi urging boycott of foreign cloth immensely benefited the Ahmedabad millowners. So when the capitalists of Gujarat lent their helping hand to him it was not merely from the point of view of charity and altruism.

Some time after an occasion arose to apply his Satyagraha technique in Champaran, a district in Behar, against the European Indigo planters. Here Gandhiji led his first mass struggle in India, though on a small scale. Here for the first time Gandhiji came in contact with Dr. Rajendra Prasad who later on became the First President of India when India became a Republic.

Again he resorted to a Satyagraha in conflict between the millowners of Ahmedabad and their labourers. Ultimately, the millowners yielded owing to their regard for Gandhiji.

As soon as the Ahmedabad dispute was settled, Gandhiji plunged into another struggle. A condition approaching famine had arisen in Kheda district and the tenants prayed that the revenue assessment for the year may be suspended. Government was very unsympathetic. In view of the attitude of the Government, Gandhiji advised the tenants to resort to Satyagraha. During this struggle, Gandhiji came for the first time in contact with Vallabhbhai Patel, who left his lucrative legal practice to become a follower of Gandhiji.

As time went on and as people of India began to show him their abounding respect, he became more bold. In February, 1916, the foundation stone of the Benares Hindu University was to be laid by the then Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. Hindu Princes

from all over India were invited to the function by the illustrious Mrs. Besant, the founder of Central Hindu College, Benares, which formed the nucleus of the University. Gandhiji was also invited by her to speak on the occasion. A galaxy of Indian Princes, bedecked with jewels, sat on the dais while the Maharajadhiraja of Darbhanga occupied the chair. Before making his speech, which was delivered in English, Gandhiji began by saying—

“It is a matter of deep humiliation and shame to us that I am compelled this evening under the shadow of this great college, and in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me

(Mahatma by Tendulkar, p. 480 Vol. I).

This was a terrible dig at our English educated leaders of the Congress. The audience heard these remarks in pin drop silence. Encouraged by the rapt attention with which his speech was so far heard, he crossed beyond the permissible limit which is allowed on such occasions. He ventured to give advice to the Princes who sat on the dais bedecked with jewels:

“Princes, go and sell your jewels. There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of the jewellery and hold it on trust for the benefit of your poor countrymen.”

He did not stop at that. He then referred to the excessive police precautions for the safety of the Viceroy, and continued to say—

“Why this distrust of the people? Is it not better that the Viceroy should take the risk of being shot rather than flooding the whole town with police harassing the people?”

(ibid. p. 183).

Mrs. Besant became restive and perturbed as she felt that this was not the place nor was it the occasion for giving out such expressions. The result of the speech was that there was a pandemonium: the Princes left; the Chairman left; the meet-

ing ended in confusion. (p. 184 Tendulkar's Mahatma, Vol. I).

Late that night, the police wrote out an order for the immediate externment of Gandhiji from Benares. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya persuaded the police authorities to withdraw the order but Gandhiji left Benares the next morning (Do).

CHAPTER VI

Jinnah's First Clash With Gandhiji (1919)

Mrs. Besant came to India in 1893 to work in the Theosophical Society which had already been founded in India in 1886 by Madam Blavatsky and Col. Olcott at Adyar near Madras. Before she came to India, she had made a deep study of the philosophy, religion and the basic ideas of the Indian culture. She came to India with a sincere and burning love for the people of India and its ancient religion. She established the Central Hindu College at Benares which later on developed into the Hindu University of Benares. Very soon, she gathered round herself a large following of Hindu youth and Hindu intelligentsia. She was not satisfied merely with religious and educational work for the Indian youth. She wanted full political freedom for India having equal status with England and other self-governing parts of the British Commonwealth. She was truly one of the greatest lovers of India—ever striving for her, suffering for her, dying for her. Her last wish was that on her death, her body should be cremated and the ashes thrown in the Ganges. Her dynamic nature was not satisfied with the tardy way in which the Congress was moving in the matter. She wanted a more vigorous political body and with that end in view founded a Home Rule League in 1916 with herself as President. Under Mrs. Besant's able leadership the Home Rule movement spread like wild fire. Lord Pentland's Government at Madras took alarm at the strength of the movement and interned Mrs. Besant and her colleagues, Mr. G. S. Arundale and Mr. B. P. Wadia. Mrs. Besant's internment stirred the whole of India, the Hindus and the Moslems alike. When Jinnah heard about the internment of Mrs. Besant, he immediately joined the Home Rule League as its President with Mr. M. R. Jayakar as its Secretary.

Jinnah's message as the President of the Home Rule League was as follows:

"My message to the Mussalmans is to join hands with your Hindu brethren. My message to the Hindus is to lift your backward brother up. In that spirit let the foundation of the Home Rule League be consecrated and there is nothing for us to fear."

In a crowded mass-meeting held under the auspices of the Bombay Association on the 30th July, 1917, Jinnah spoke as follows:

"..... We protest against the internment of Mrs. Besant and her co-workers not only on principle but also because it is an attempt to intern the Home Rule or self-government scheme of reforms framed and adopted conjointly by the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League at Lucknow. We declare that we stand by that scheme unswervingly and unflinchingly, and we shall do all that lies in our power for its realisation at the close of the war..."

At this time Gandhiji's reputation as a public worker was at its highest and Jinnah himself in one of the meetings of the Home Rule League proposed the name of Gandhiji to be its President. But Mr. Jayakar, the Secretary of the League, was sceptic about the fitness of Gandhiji to be its President. Mr. Jayakar thought it proper that he should let Gandhiji know the reasons of his objections. Hence he addressed the following letter to Gandhiji (Story of My Life by Jayakar, p. 318, Vol. I):

"It is not impossible that you will demand from us before long a change in our objects and aims, even try to secure in our creed a place for some of your pet theories, which many of us may be inclined to regard as fantastic fads."

Gandhiji's reply to Mr. Jayakar's letter was as follows:

"A great deal of what you say appeals to me, though I am disturbed by your description as 'fads' of some of my theories. May I tell you that the only 'fad' on which I would insist, if I ultimately decided to join your League, would be a common language for India, to be found in

one of the vernaculars of the country and the gospel of Swadesi (buy Indian). You need have no apprehension that any other theories of mine your League will be called upon to accept." (Do).

Mr. Jayakar says—

"This assurance was enough to satisfy most of my friends and ultimately it was decided that he should join the League and become its head." (Do).

After being installed as the President of the Home Rule League, Gandhiji issued a manifesto which explained why he had joined the League and how he would utilise it:

"It is a distinct departure from the even tenor of my life for me to belong to an organisation that is purely and frankly political. But, after careful deliberations with friends, I have joined the All-India Home Rule League and accepted the office of its President. Some friends whom I consulted told me that I should not join any political organisation and that, if I did, I would lose the position of splendid isolation I enjoy at present. I confess that this caution had considerable weight with me. At the same time, I felt that if I was accepted by the League, as I was, I should be wrong in not identifying myself with *an organisation that I could utilise for the advancement of causes in which I had specialised ...*" [italics are by the author.]

(Mahatma by Tendulkar, Vol. I. p. 288).

This was a breach of written promise he had given to Mr. Jayakar before being taken in as the President of the League.

After assuming the Presidentship of the League, Gandhiji called a general meeting of the members to change the name and creed of the League. He proposed to change the name of the Home Rule League to that of Swarajya Sabha. Jinnah and some other foundation members opposed Gandhiji's proposals. But, Gandhiji as Chairman of the meeting, overruled their objections and declared in an uncompromising tone:

"It was open to any member, be he a life-member or otherwise, to resign his membership if he thought he could not remain a member of the Sabha under its altered constitution."

Gandhiji's arbitrary action in changing the name and creed of the Home Rule League was resented by Jinnah and several other prominent Leaguers who resigned from the League in protest. This letter of protest was signed, among others, by a powerful opposition consisting of Jinnah, Jayakar, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Mangaldas Pakvasa, Nagindas Master and K. M. Munshi and others. The letter, dated the 27th October, 1920, ran as follows: (Story of My Life by Jayakar, Vol. I, p. 405):

"We, the undersigned members of the League, are of opinion that the constitution adopted by the League in its general meeting held in the Morarji Hall on the 3rd instant constitutes a fundamental departure from the aims, objects and methods of work hitherto pursued by the League We are further of opinion that these changes in the constitution were made by adopting a procedure contrary to the rules and regulations of the League. We venture to say that your ruling aiming at validating the said procedure was both incorrect and arbitrary

We, therefore, with great sorrow, tender our resignation of our membership of the League and of such offices thereof as are at present held by any of us."

Neither Mrs. Besant nor Mr. Jinnah ever forgave Gandhiji for his destruction of the Home Rule League with all its ideals and aspirations.

CHAPTER VII

Gandhiji becomes the Recruiting Sergeant for the First World War

In 1918, the then Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, invited Gandhiji to attend a War-Conference called by him. This invitation was issued after a good deal of inter-official consultation. On April 17, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy wrote to the Home Member :

"H.E. the Viceroy asks me to invite urgently an expression of your opinion whether it would or would not be a good thing to ask Mr. Gandhi to come up and see the Viceroy. It seems possible that his restless activities might be diverted into a useful channel, whereas if he is left to his devices, his movements and energies always seem to make for trouble." The Home Member replied : "I notice that Mr. Gandhiji is anxious to be employed for war-service in Mesopotamia or France, and if he could be sent out to Mesopotamia in any capacity, it would save a lot of trouble," "(Tendulkar, Vol. I, p. 226).

Gandhiji not only participated in the War Conference, but also joined the recruiting campaign with great enthusiasm against the advice of his admiring friends, Poet Tagore, Rev. Andrews and others. He issued many leaflets asking young people to enlist as recruits. He said in one of the leaflets :

"The easiest and straight way to win Swaraj is to participate in the defence of the Empire. If the Empire perishes, with it will perish our cherished aspirations." (Mahatma by Tendulkar, Vol. I, p. 229).

In view of his supposed adherence to the principles of Ahimsa and Non-violence, one of his pamphlets seems to contain words which are inconsistent with his supposed principles :

"Among many misdeeds of the British rule in India, history will look upon the Arms Act depriving a whole

nation of arms as the blackest. If we want the Arms Act to be repealed, if we want to learn the use of arms, here is a golden opportunity." (Do, p. 231).

His enthusiasm for recruitment of soldiers for the War knew no bounds. To him recruitment work was more important than even the Congress work. At that time a Special Session of the Indian National Congress was about to be held at Bombay. On August 25, 1918, *Gandhiji wrote to Tilak*: "*I do not intend to attend the Congress session. Also I do not intend to attend the Moderates' Conference. I believe we can render a great service to India by devoting ourselves to the work of recruitment and taking lakhs of people with us*" To Surendra Nath Banerjee, who was the most prominent leader of the Moderates he wrote—"I hold strong and probably peculiar views not shared by many of the leaders. I implicitly believe that if we were to devote our attention exclusively to recruiting we should gain full responsible government in a year's time, if not sooner." (Do, p. 231-232).

He then toured round the Gujarat villages and called for 'twenty recruits from every village as a sacrifice for Empire and Swaraj.' He wrote to the Viceroy: "If I could make my countrymen retrace their steps, I would make them withdraw all Congress resolutions, and not whisper 'Home Rule' during the pendency of the War. I would make India offer all her able-bodied sons as a sacrifice to the Empire at its critical moment..." He deprecated all talks of bargain or condition in connection with recruiting and pressed upon all that recruiting should be unconditional. He admonished Mrs. Besant by saying—"I search New India in vain for an emphatic declaration from you in favour of unconditional recruiting." He even ventured to administer a rebuke to Tilak. Tilak had sent him a cheque of Rs. 50,000/- adding that he would help to recruit 5,000 volunteers from Maharashtra if Gandhi could secure a promise from Government that Indians would be eligible for commissioned rank in the Army. Gandhiji refused to accept the cheque as it was accompanied with conditions in the nature of a bargain.

When the War Conference was over, Gandhiji drafted a long letter to the Viceroy expressing his views on various aspects of the war measures to be taken in India. The affected and pompous manner in which he sent this letter to the Viceroy in Simla reveals a characteristic trait of Gandhiji. In his autobiography, (p. 544) he says—

“The letter had to be sent to Simla, where the Viceroy had gone immediately after the conference. The letter had for me considerable importance, and sending it by post would have meant delay. I wanted to save time, yet I was not inclined to send it by any messenger I came across. I wanted some pure man to carry it and hand it personally at the Viceregal lodge. Dinabandhu Andrews and Principal Rudra suggested the name of the good Rev. Ireland of the Cambridge Mission. The letter thus delivered at the hands of a pure-minded man had, as I thought, the desired result.”

One of the passages in the said letter makes very interesting reading. Here we reproduce it:

“Whilst, therefore, it is clear to me that we should give to the Empire every available man for its defence, I fear that I cannot say the same thing about financial assistance. My intimate intercourse with the ryots convinces me that India has already donated to the Imperial Exchequer beyond her capacity...” (p. 548 of the autobiography).

From the above passage it seems that Gandhiji felt no qualms of conscience in recruiting every available man to serve as canon-fodder, but in the matter of financial assistance he was over-cautious and stingy. In his opinion, it seems, money is greater value than human life and while the wastage of human life can be endured but not the wastage of money. From a votary of Ahimsa who shudders at the word ‘blood-shed,’ it is a very interesting letter.

Gandhiji joined the recruiting campaign disregarding the advice of his sincere well-wishers. But, later on, he gave an

apologetic explanation for his part in the recruiting. He then said—"No doubt, it was a mixed motive that prompted me to participate in the war. Two things I can recall. Though as an individual I was opposed to war, I had no status for offering effective non-violent resistance... For instance, I would have no status to resist a savage offering animal sacrifice. The other motive was to qualify for Swaraj through good offices of the statesmen of the Empire... ("Hiren Mukherjee's Gandhi, p. 43). He admits here that his activities in connection with recruiting were tainted with motives of expediency. In the face of this admission, it seems that his ceremonious delivery of his letter relating to the recruiting campaign through the hands of a pure-minded man was meaningless.

CHAPTER VIII

Jalianwalabagh and After (1919)

Towards the end of 1917, the Government of India appointed a Committee with Mr. Justice Rowlatt of the King's Bench Division as the President and with two Indian jurists—Mr. Justice Kumarswami Sastri of the Madras High Court and Sir Provash Chandra Mitter, a leading Advocate of the Calcutta High Court—as Members.

“to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India and to examine and consider the difficulties that had arisen in dealing with such conspiracies and to advise as to the legislation, if any, necessary to enable the Government to deal effectively with them.”

This Committee was required to sit in camera. It presented its Report on the 15th April, 1918. The Report and the recommendations of the Committee were published and put before the public. Two bills, called the Rowlatt Bills, were presented in the Indian Legislature following the recommendations of the Committee. One of the Bills was a temporary measure, intended to deal with the situation arising from the expiry of the Defence of India Act, six months after the formal conclusion of peace. The second Bill was rather stiff and was intended to introduce some permanent changes in the ordinary criminal law of the land. The Indian leaders, almost in a body, condemned both the Bills. The Congress condemned the Bills on the ground that they would interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people and impede the healthy growth of public opinion. In its opinion, it would also prejudicially affect the working of the new Constitutional Reforms (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms). It is to be noted that in opposing the Rowlatt Bills neither did the Congress nor any other political

party transgress the constitutional limit and that the Home Member, Sir William Vincent, in deference to the public opinion, withdrew the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill.

Now, Gandhiji took the field and declared that he would lead a Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience Movement if the Rowlatt Bill was passed. When Gandhiji uttered his threat, Mrs. Besant, who herself also vigorously protested against the Bill, gave a solemn warning to Gandhiji not to play with fire. With her remarkable knowledge of Indian mob-psychology, Mrs. Besant plainly told Gandhiji that Civil Disobedience Movement would result in releasing forces whose potentialities for evil were incalculable and that there was bound to be mob-violence in consequence. In this connection, the following remarks by a foreign visitor are very apposit:

“You do not need to be in India for very long, before you realise that its widely disparate peoples have one thing in common; a remarkably low boiling point so far as political temper is concerned. Nowhere in the world does a mob respond so quickly or so savagely to a fire brands call for action (L. Mosley—The Last Days of British Raj, p. 11).

Gandhiji, however, felt that a chance had come to utilise his South African experience, and to make an experiment with his own ideas of Civil Disobedience, and to show their inherent strength. In spite of warnings given to him by Mrs. Besant and other Indian Liberal leaders, Gandhiji could not resist the temptation of starting a Satyagraha.

Gandhiji organised his forces at Sabarmati independently of the Congress and 6th April was fixed as the day of All-India Hartal. The response of the masses was whole-hearted but it did not remain non-violent in all places. Government replied with bullets wherever disturbance occurred. At Amritsar terrible things happened for which the Punjab Government must be held responsible to a great extent. Upto the 9th April, the Ram Navami day, there was no untoward event there. Though it was

a Hindu religious day, yet nevertheless both Hindus and Muslims celebrated it together. On that day, the then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dyer, passed orders for deportation of two popular leaders, Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew, one a Hindu and the other a Muslim. As soon as the people heard that the two leaders have been taken away to an unknown destination, they started towards the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner. The military on duty opposed the crowd, and a clash occurred between them. "The crowd was fired upon, and there were several casualties with one or two deaths. The crowd turned back into the city carrying their victims in procession, and on their way set fire to the National Bank buildings and killed its European Manager. Altogether the mob-violence was responsible for the deaths of five Englishmen and for the destruction by fire of a Bank, a Railway goods-shed and some other public buildings." (PattabhiSitaramayya's *History of the Congress*, Vol. I, p. 163).

In the aforesaid circumstances, Martial Law was declared at Amritsar and General Dyer was appointed Martial Law administrator. After taking charge of the situation, General Dyer prohibited all meetings and gatherings. It is not quite clear on what date the Martial Law was formally declared, but it is quite certain that General Dyer took charge of the situation on the 10th April and at once prohibited all meetings and gatherings of the people. On the 13th April, which was the Hindu New Year's Day, an unauthorised public meeting was held at a place, called Jalianwalabagh, which was surrounded on all sides by high walls with only one entrance to it. When General Dyer heard that a public meeting had been convened against his express orders, he went to the spot with a battalion of soldiers and without any previous warning gave orders to fire. About five hundred persons were killed and over a thousand were wounded. The wounded were left to suffer through the whole night without water to drink, without medical attendance or without aid of any character. General Dyer in his evidence before the Hunter Committee appointed by the Government to enquire into the massacre, said that he deliberately acted in the way he did—

“to create a moral effect from a military point of view, not only on those who were present, but more specially throughout Punjab.” The Congress also set up a Committee of Enquiry. Many hideous instances of atrocities committed by the military authorities came out in the evidence collected by it. The spot at which a European woman was assaulted became the scene of the most inhuman and degrading retaliatory measures against the Indians. Soldiers were posted there to see that every Indian passing the spot was made to crawl on his stomach over a certain distance.

The Government was, at first, unrepentent. It held Gandhiji and his Passive Resistance directly responsible for all disturbances and all mishaps and it gave a stern warning to him to withdraw his Movement. On receipt of the warning, Gandhiji behaved in a most unexpected manner and made an abject surrender, as the following Press Statement dated the 21st July, 1919 made by Gandhiji shows: (PattabhiSitaramayya, p. 179, Vol. I.)

“The Government of India had given me a grave warning that the resumption of civil disobedience is likely to be attended with serious consequences to public security.....In response to these warnings and to the public desire urgently expressed by Dewan Bahadur L. A. Govinda Raghava Iyer, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar and several editors, I have, after deep consideration, decided not to resume civil resistance for the time being..... (thereafter Gandhiji mentioned some small and petty concessions about the savage sentences passed by Martial Law Courts and profusely thanked the Government for the same and for the promise of a Committee of Enquiry for the Punjab disturbances)..... With these indications of good will, it would be unwise on my part not to listen to the warning given by the Government. Indeed, my acceptance of the Government's advice is a further demonstration of the nature of civil resistance. A civil resister never seeks to embarrass the Government

The first point that arises in the reader's mind on a perusal of the above said statement of Gandhiji is that, if a civil resister never seeks to embarrass the Government, then why did he start his movement at all and rouse the passions of ignorant masses against public warning given to him by Mrs. Besant and other Liberal leaders?

Sir C. Y. Chintamani, a distinguished journalist of those days, criticised the action of Gandhiji in the following words:

“The passing of the Rowlatt Bill brought Mr. Gandhi on the scene. With a faith in the passive resistance, almost pathetic and incurable, brought over from South Africa, Mr. Gandhi had rehearsed the practice of this art on a smaller scale in connection with local grievances in Bardoli in Gujarat and Champaran in Bihar. The success he achieved there led him to think of the same method on other occasions and on a scale less suited to it. He started the Satyagraha Campaign against the Rowlatt Act. He had been warned that there was such a tremendous amount of anti-British feeling in the country and so little understanding of his own niceties in the practice of Satyagraha, that he would be letting loose forces of disorder which he would be unable to control. He brushed aside all objections with a sweep of his hands and embarked upon his campaign. The sequel was far worse than those who had warned him had feared.” (Page 127, Indian politics since Mutiny).

Jalianwalabagh massacres were followed by frightful atrocities committed, in the name of law and order, by the Punjab officials, civil and military. Towards the end of the year, the annual session of the Indian National Congress was held at Amritsar with Pandit Motilal Nehru as the President. Two days before the commencement of the actual sitting of the Congress, a Royal Proclamation was issued on the 24th December, 1919, announcing new Reforms (commonly known as the

Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms). The Royal Proclamation, evidently the handiwork of Mr. E. S. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, was a very well-worded document intended to assuage the bitter feelings roused by the Punjab wrongs. It had its desired effect and it was well-received by the Indian leaders including Tilak and Gandhiji. Tilak sent a telegram conveying his loyal and grateful thanks to His Majesty. Gandhiji took the view that the Royal Proclamation opened a new era and consequently India should fully respond to the generous sentiments contained in it. The mellowing effect of the Proclamation was apparent in the proceedings of the Congress also. In its open session, Gandhiji himself moved the Resolution thanking Mr. Montagu for his labours in connection with the Reforms and assuring him that, in spite of their inadequacy, the Reforms would be worked in a cordial spirit so as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government in India. Jinnah, whole-heartedly, associated himself with the said Resolution.

Many people think that the Amritsar Session saw the first entry of Gandhiji into the Congress. He himself, however, did not think so. In his own words (p 279, Vol. I, Tendulkar).

“I do not consider my participation in Congress proceedings at Amritsar as my real entrance into the Congress politics. My attendance at the previous Congress sessions was nothing more perhaps than an annual renewal of allegiance to the Congress. I never felt on those occasions that I had any other work cut out for me except that of a mere private, nor did I desire more.”

There is no doubt that in spite of the sabrerattling of the non-official Britishers in India and the anti-Indian attitude shown in the House of Lords debate on Punjab happenings, the British Government realised the enormities of the Punjab wrongs and were prepared to make amends for it. The Royal Proclamation was, therefore, very carefully prepared to create an atmosphere of peace and confidence. It not only promised full Responsible Government as its aim but also made a fervent personal appeal

in the name of the King-Emperor. "to the people and the officials of Government to respect each other and to work in harmony and kindness, and called upon the officials to assist the people and their representatives in an orderly advance towards free institutions " and added—

'It is my earnest desire at this time that, so far as possible, any trace of bitterness between my people and those who are responsible for my Government should be obliterated...

"It is my intention to send My dear son to India next winter to inaugurate on My behalf the new Chamber of Princes and the new Constitutions in British India. May he find mutual good-will and confidence prevailing among those on whom will rest the future service of the country ... "

How fully the Indian politicians responded to the call made by the King-Emperor will be apparent from the speeches made by Gandhiji and Jinnah during the session of the Congress which commenced two days after the Royal Proclamation. After deprecating all extremist talks of obstructing the working of the Reforms, Gandhiji made a loyal and conciliatory speech in which he said as follows:

"... On the question of the propriety of obstruction I say that Indian culture demands that we shall trust the man who extends the hand of fellowship. The King-Emperor has extended the hand of fellowship and if he has done so we do not reject the advance. Tell Mr. Montagu and all the officials of the beaurocracy, we are going to trust you ... "

Gandhiji's resolution was seconded by Jinnah. His support of Gandhiji's resolution was whole-hearted. He addressed the opponents of Gandhiji's resolution in the following challenging words:

"... I ask you, do you object to work the Reforms so as to make the establishment of full Responsible Gov-

ernment as early as possible? (Cries of 'No,' 'No'). Then why not say so? I, therefore, say that Mahatma Gandhi does not propose to do anything more than what this house has expressed over and over again—that we must work the Reforms Act."

The interesting thing to note in the above speech is the respect shown to Gandhiji by Jinnah by calling him 'Mahatma' Gandhi.

It is to be particularly noted that, along with the Congress, the Muslim League, the Khilafat and the Jamait-ul-ulema held their sessions simultaneously at Amritsar. Hakim Ajmal Khan presided over the Muslim League. The resolution on the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms passed by the League was on the lines adopted by the Congress.

After the session of the Indian National Congress in December, 1919, when all were ready to forgive and forget, it seemed that 1920 would usher in a new era of peace and prosperity from which strife and hatred would be totally banished. Signs were hopeful that the new Reforms would be worked in a cordial spirit so as to hasten the coming of full Responsible Government as had been promised by no less a person than the King-Emperor himself. Tilak, Gandhiji, Jinnah and all other Indian leaders were in a mood for co-operation. In these circumstances, nobody could dream of any major political disturbance in the shape of any Non-Co-operation or Civil Disobedience Movement. But, to recall Lord Canning's words on the eve of Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, a piece of cloud no bigger than a man's hand appeared in the horizon in the shape of the Khilafat Movement. With this movement India had no direct concern whatsoever. Yet Gandhiji, for his own reasons, took a plunge into it. Gandhiji's action in this respect brought countless miseries upon India from whose ill effects she is still suffering, and whose end is still not yet in sight.

CHAPTER IX

Gandhiji Plunges into Khilafat Movement—Gandhian Age of Indian History Begins (1920)

The plunge of Gandhiji into the Khilafat movement of 1920 was a momentous event in the history of India. With this plunge, he started his historic role in India and the Gandhian age of Indian history began. Modern age of Indian history began with Raja Ram Mohun Ray who was mainly instrumental in opening the door of Western knowledge to India. Thenceforward, the leadership of the country was assumed by leaders who were educated on western lines and who were imbued with western political ideas of liberalism. Dadabhai Naoroji, Pheroze-shah Mehta, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjee and others followed the footsteps of Raja Ram Mohun Ray. Now came Gandhiji who preached that for all these years India had been treading on a wrong path which must now be forsaken. Salvation of India lies, he said, in unlearning all she had learnt so long. As a result, the political current of India took a new channel—Gandhian channel—which ran its tempestuous course till 1947, leaving its profound influence on the destiny of India.

There is not the slightest doubt that Gandhiji was one of the greatest geniuses the world had ever seen. He was a man of great ideas but full of complexities and contradictions. His inconsistencies make it very difficult to understand his psychology or to know what Gandhism really means. We find him constantly preaching Ahimsa and non-violence but we also found him busy in recruiting soldiers during the First World War. He kept quite aloof from the activities of Jinnah—the great ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity—in bringing the Congress and the Muslim League together but he ardently espoused the cause of Turkish Empire by taking a leading part in the Khilafat Movement organised by Mahammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. The Beha-

viourist School of psychology says that you can understand a man's psychology only by his behaviour and not by his windy verbiage, however pious his words may outwardly appear. A study of his behaviour in connection with the Khilafat Movement supplies the key to a proper understanding of Gandhiji's psychology, his ultimate aim, his Life's Mission, as he called. He returned to India in January, 1915. Till 1919, he was lukewarm towards the Indian National Congress and towards the activities of Jinnah for bringing Hindu and Muslim together. From 1915 to 1919, he mainly concerned himself with several minor satyagrahas at Champaran and other places. Even after Jalianwalabagh he remained calm, and advised moderation and restraint on all sides. But towards the Khilafat Movement, his attitude was completely different. The moment he got his chance to join this movement, he felt like a war-horse and plunged into the battle with his whole heart. Why he was indifferent to Jinnah and was full of warmth towards Mahammad Ali, Shaukat Ali and Maulana Azad, why he was calm and cool even after Jalianwalabagh massacres and Punjab atrocities, and why he was ardent and enthusiastic towards the question of Turkish Caliphate with which neither he nor India had any concern whatsoever are very interesting questions, the answers to which help us to understand the real Gandhi and the main spring of all Gandhian activities. Gandhiji reveals himself and reveals his overweening ambition in his behaviour in connection with the Khilafat movement and, therefore, a study of this movement and its history is necessary for the students of Indian history and politics.

Now let us make a short study of the history of the Caliphate. It was prophet Mahammad who effected for the first time the emotional and political integration of the entire Arab world within the religion of Islam which he founded. Under the influence of his teachings, aided by the sword of Islam, Muslim faith spread not only through the entire Arab region but extended much further. The Caliph is supposed to be the Protector and the Spiritual and Temporal Head of the entire world of Islam. Sometime after the death of Prophet Mahammad

the Caliphate passed from his family into the hands of the powerful rulers of Damascus in Syria from whom, later on, it was snatched by the Abbaside dynasty of Baghdad. Caliph Harun-al-Rasid of Baghdad was the most illustrious name among the Caliphs of Baghdad. Thereafter, in the 16th century Caliphate passed from the Arab people to an alien race, the Ottoman Turks of Constantinople, who had no emotional bond with the Arabs except the common religion of Islam.

When Jazirut-ul-Arab (Arabian countries) came under the rule of the Ottoman Turks, the misery of the Arab people knew no bounds. Arabs were treated as a subject race and consequently they were anxious to throw off the Turkish yoke whenever they got an opportunity to do so. Such an opportunity was presented to them when in the First World War Turkey joined Germany against England. Now Britain definitely came to the side of the Arabs and promised them freedom from the shackles of the Turkish Empire. A reputed Intelligence Officer, Col. T. E. Lawrence, was deputed to help the Arabs. Hussein, the Sherif of Mecca, and his two sons Feisal and Abdulla, took prominent part in the war of Arabs against the Turks. On the conclusion of the war, ~~Hejaz~~ Hejaz was made an independent kingdom, Feisal was placed on the throne of Iraq and Abdulla was entrusted with the government of Trans-Jordan. In Arab lands a new class of Arab leaders arose who cared more for self-government and independent sovereignty than for Caliphate. In Turkey itself, the young Turks rose in rebellion against the Caliph Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey and threw him into prison. The progressives among the Turks, under the inspiration of Mustafa Kamal Pasha, were bent on discarding the theocratic rule and very soon they abolished the office of Caliphate itself.

In view of the aforesaid facts which make it clear that the Caliph was no longer required in the heart of Islam itself, it is inconceivable to think that the Indian Mussalmans could have any grievance, real or supposed, over the Caliphate or the Khilafat. But nevertheless a hue and cry was raised in the

country over it and a mighty movement was started among the Muslim masses all over India. The main springs of the Khilafat agitation were two brothers, Mahammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, one of them an Oxford graduate. Ali Brothers raised the cry that the continued control of the Jazirut-ul-Arab by the Caliph of Islam was the very essence of Muslim faith. What Ali Brothers really wanted was a Muslim mass-movement in the cause of Pan-Islamism. For the purpose of rousing passion among the Muslim masses nothing is more effective than the slogan 'Islam is in danger.' The religious appeal made by these two westernised brothers, who by that time adopted full Muslim orthodoxy with bearded faces, had great effect on the mind of ignorant Muslim masses, and the Khilafat movement started by them gathered strong forces around it. It was then decided to send a deputation to England to acquaint the British Premier with the so-called demands and sentiments of the Indian Muslims. The deputation sailed for England in the beginning of 1920 with Mahammad Ali at its head. The British Premier, Mr. Lloyd George, told the deputationists clearly that while Turkey would be left undisturbed in possession of lands which were really Turkish, her control over the Arab lands would not be permitted any longer. Thus the Indian Khilafat deputation returned empty-handed from England. The Khilafat leaders now allied themselves with Gandhiji.

About Gandhiji's alliance with the Khilafat leaders, Tendulkar says as follows (p. 283, Vol. I):

"Around Gandhi new forces were gathering. The Ulema felt that the Muslim divines of India whose collective power and influence had been shattered after the Revolt of 1857 should again come together. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad entered the field. More than any other Muslim leader ... he was a tower of strength to Gandhiji."

The moment the Khilafat leaders, Muslim Ulemas and Maulana Azad approached Gandhiji for aid and assistance in

the Khilafat cause, Gandhiji, instinctively felt that a tidal wave had come in favour of his own cause and he must avail himself of it at its flood. He now felt like a war-horse prancing at the sound of war-drums. The most noticeable thing was the change of his entire attitude from what he assumed only a few months before at the Amritsar session of the Indian National Congress in December, 1919. If there was any occasion to raise the banner of revolt against the British, the Punjab massacres and the Punjab atrocities supplied adequate reasons for doing so, but nevertheless we find that Gandhiji was exercising his pacifying influence and was urging moderation and restraint on all sides at the Congress session. But he made a complete somersault when the Khilafat leaders approached him to find means to avenge the supposed Khilafat wrongs. He was now on war-path and pronounced that he would lead a Non-co-operation Movement if the Muslim demands on the Khilafat wrongs were not satisfied. He held out threatening language towards England in a manifesto, dated 10th March, 1920, which ran as follows:

“... England cannot expect a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights which to Moslems mean a matter of life and death...” (p. 284, Tendulkar's Mahatma, Vol. I).

His close associate of those days, Indulal Yajnik, said—

“Political circles were frankly perplexed and amazed at the increasing military tones and tactics of Mr. Gandhi, who began really to surpass even the most orthodox Mahomedan in his fanatical zeal for the cause of Islam (p. 252-53, Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid.)”

He was now fully convinced that a new opportunity had come to him of making his experiment of Non-co-operation on a grand scale. Success on a small scale which he had achieved in South Africa and Champaran had gone to his head and made him intoxicated. He felt that the Ali Brothers had already prepared the field for him by raising the slogan ‘Islam is in danger.’ The elemental force of mass-passion generated by this

cry would place in his hands immense power which he would harness to his own chariot for his own dreams of a new message to the world which at the same time would be very helpful in bringing freedom to India. Gokhale foresaw this before his death and became very uneasy in his mind about the future activities of Gandhiji in India. He perhaps did not want that his *Servants of India Society* should be associated with the further activities of Gandhiji and hence he supported his colleagues in their refusal to admit Gandhiji into their Society.

It was during the Khilafat agitation that Gandhiji met for the first time Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. In his autobiography, Maulana Azad says that he was born in a family which originally came from Herat. It does not appear that the family struck any binding root in India or had any sentimental bond with India. His father, according to his autobiography, migrated to Mecca and settled there and Maulana Azad was born there in 1888. Very soon after his birth, his father came to Calcutta for medical treatment but continued to stay on. In this way, childhood and youth of Maulana Azad were spent in Calcutta. While still in his teens, he left India and travelled through various Islamic countries, namely, Persia, Egypt and Turkey. At this period, tremendous anti-British feelings prevailed in these countries and Maulana Azad was much affected by them. He returned to India in 1912 and settled in Calcutta wherefrom he started two papers—*Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh*—in Urdu script. These papers were violently anti-British in tone and were dealt with under the Press Act of those days. On the outbreak of the First World War he was interned and released only on the termination of the war. After coming out of detention he immediately plunged himself into the Khilafat Movement started by Mahammad Ali and Shaukat Ali.

The moment Gandhiji set his eyes on Maulana Azad, he felt that here was the man who would be most useful to him to chain Muslim fanaticism to his chariot. Jinnah was an Indian patriot, his chief interest being the freedom of Mother India whereas in the case of Gandhiji his interest in the

Indian freedom was only secondary, his primary interest being to demonstrate the inherent strength of the ideas he brought from South Africa and to make India a bastion of Gandhism and thereafter to propagate Gandhism to the world from India. From his point of view, Jinnah was of no use to him. So he discarded Jinnah, the ardent Congress-man, the disciple of Dadabhai Naoroji, the beloved lieutenant of Gokhale, the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, but hugged to his bosom fanatics like Mahammad Ali, Shaukat Ali and others who were hitherto known only for their communal and Pan-Islamic activities, and whose interest lay more in the affairs of Arabia, Turkey and Jazirut-ul-Arab than in Indian freedom. The sponsoring of the Khilafat movement by Gandhiji destroyed the Lucknow Pact which was the handiwork of Jinnah. Lucknow Pact showed the way for the settlement of Hindu-Muslim political problems. But, on the other hand, the Khilafat movement by bringing religious fanaticism into political questions prepared the path for future Hindu-Muslim antagonism in a fiercer form.

What happened after Gandhiji had grasped the hands of the Khilafat agitators is described by Maulana Azad as follows:

“The question now arose about the next step. A meeting was held in which Mr. Mahammad Ali, Mr. Shaukat Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulavi Abdul Bari of Firanghi Mahal Lucknow were also present. Gandhiji presented his programme of Non-co-operation. He said that the days of deputations and memorials were over. We must withdraw all support from the Government and this alone would persuade the Government to come to terms. He suggested that all Government titles should be returned, law courts and educational institutions should be boycotted, Indians should resign from the services and refuse to take any part in the newly constituted legislatures.” (p. 9, *India Wins Freedom*).

As we have said before, during these negotiations and conferences Gandhiji met Maulana Azad for the first time. The spiritual affinity between the two will be apparent from the following passage in Maulana Azad's book:

"As soon as Gandhiji described his proposal I remembered that this was the programme which Tolstoy had outlined many years ago.... Tolstoy advised that the proper method to paralyse an oppressive Government was to refuse taxes, resign from all services and boycott all institutions supporting the Government. He believed that such a programme would compel any Government to come to terms. I also remembered that I myself suggested a similar programme in some articles in '*Al Hilal*.'

"Others reacted according to their own backgrounds. Hakim Ajmal Khan said that he wanted some time to consider the programme. He would not like to advise others till he was willing to accept the programme himself. Maulavi Abdul Bari said that Gandhiji's suggestions raised fundamental issues and he could not give a reply till he had meditated and sought divine guidance. Mahammad Ali and Shaukat Ali said that they would wait till Maulavi Abdul Bari's decision was known.

"Gandhiji then turned to me. I said without a moment's hesitation that I fully accepted the programme. If people really wanted to help Turkey, there was no alternative to the programme sketched by Gandhiji." (at p. 9).

On the strength of his alliance with the Khilafat leaders, Gandhiji formally inaugurated his Non-Co-operation movement on the 1st August, 1920, the day following the night in which Lokmanya Tilak died. In company of Mahammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, he began to move about with the Ulemas and Maulanas and had long talks with them on Islamic philosophy, violence, non-violence etc. In order to bring the Muslim divines in his fold he was ready to make some relaxation of his elastic doctrine of non-violence and in his statement dated 10th March, 1920, he said as follows (Tendulkar, Vol. I, p. 285);

"But Muslims have special Koranic obligations in which the Hindus may or may not join. They, therefore,

reserve to themselves the right, in the event of the failure of non-co-operation cum non-violence, in order to enforce justice, to resort to all such methods as may be enjoined by the Islamic scriptures. I venture heartily to associate myself with this resolution."

Dr. Ambedkar writes:

"There was another prominent fact to which I drew the attention of Mahatma Gandhi. Both of us were together one night at the Khilafat conference at Nagpur. The Ayats (verses) of the Quran recited by the Maulanas on that occasion contained frequent references to Jihad. ... When I drew his attention to this phase of the Khilafat movement, Mahatmaji smiled and said 'They are alluding to the British bureaucracy.' In reply I said that it was all subversive of the idea of non-violence and when the reversion of feeling came, the Mahomedan Maulanas would not refrain from using these verses against the Hindus. (B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or the Partition of India*, p. 149)."

Gandhiji's religio-political activities in this respect were not approved by the leading politicians of the country. His fiery speeches in support of the Khilafat were disapproved even by his own followers. One of his close associates of those days, Indulal Yajnik, said as follows:

"... We had never bargained with Mr. Gandhi to join him in any semi-religious or religio-political movement. We had joined him solely with a view to following him on any path of direct action to wage purely political fights with a view to securing national liberty. (Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, Pp. 252-53)."

After formally inaugurating the Non-co-operation movement, Gandhiji and Ali Brothers made a whirlwind tour of the country rousing the Muslims to a high pitch of excitement. Many thousands of ignorant and innocent Muslim peasants were prevailed upon to start on Hijrat (Exodus) to an Islamic

country after breaking up their homes in India. When they reached the border of Afghanistan, the Afghan authorities forbade their entry into Afghan territory. There was also a ghastly collision with the Afghan soldiers. Bulk of them thereafter returned to India after unspeakable sufferings and considerable loss of life. Return to India did not end the miseries of the survivors, because most of them before undertaking the Hijrat had sold away their lands and properties in India.

Another unhappy event was the Moplah rebellion in Malabar. The Moplas are a devout Muslim community who made their living by agriculture and fishing. The Khilafat movement roused these people to fanaticism. They declared a holy war to set up a Caliphate Kingdom. In course of the Moplah rebellion, several Europeans, many Hindu landowners and money-lenders were murdered, Hindu temples were desecrated and many Hindus converted into Islam. The Government suppressed the rebellion with the greatest severity and many lives were lost.

Hindu-Muslim unity over the Khilafat movement was never based on firm foundation. To the Muslim masses it was a religious movement without any thought of Indian freedom *whereas for Gandhiji it was a weapon for his own ends*. Gandhiji said—
“I claim that with us both the Khilafat is a central fact, with Maulana Mahammad Ali because it is his religion, with me because, in laying down my life for the Khilafat, I ensure safety of the cow, that is, my religion, from the Mussalman knife.”

When the temporary Hindu-Muslim friendship born out of Khilafat movement ended, the demon of communalism again raised its head and there were numerous Hindu-Muslim riots in various places. At Kohat, hell was let loose upon the Hindus and the entire Hindu population evacuated Kohat. For all the murders, incendiarism and destruction of property, aggrieved Hindus laid the blame at Gandhiji's doors: “You asked the Hindus to make common cause with the Muslims on the Khilafat question and now that the Khilafat is over, the awakened Muslims have proclaimed a kind of holy war against us Hindus.”

The Muslims said: "We simple-minded people have been unjustly treated. You, by your agitation, won over Mahammad Ali to your side and you attacked the famous institution at Aligarh built with patient care by Sir Syed Ahmed. Your boycott of Councils prevented our able men from going to the Councils to the prejudice of the interest of our community (Tendulkar, Vol. 2, p. 130)."

Gandhiji's Khilafat agitation led to another unhappy result. The then Viceroy, Lord Reading, became afraid that this movement would lead the Indian Muslims to permanent opposition to the British Raj. So he sent a telegram to Edwin Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, recommending that suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey over Constantinople and its neighbouring territories should be restored. In order to appease the Muslim feeling, this telegram was published without taking formal consent of the British Cabinet. For this act of indiscretion, Edwin Montagu, one of the greatest friends of India, was peremptorily dismissed from his post and had to go out of public life for ever. Shortly after, he died broken-hearted. A life dedicated to India was thus sacrificed to the Khilafat movement.

If the Indian Muslims cared to follow the proceedings of the conference at Lausanne in 1922-23, they would have found that the Turks were more interested in getting possession of Mosul oil-fields rather than for the suzerainty of the Caliph over the Jazirut-ul-Arab or Muslim Holy Places. It was a strange spectacle that while the misguided Indian Muslims were prepared to lay down their lives for the maintenance of the Turkish sovereignty over the Arab lands, the Turks themselves were prepared to barter away Arabia, Syria and Palestine for the rich oil-fields of Mosul. On March 3, 1924, the final and deadly blow was struck at the Khilafat movement by Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha. A Turk, who exiled the Khalifa Abdul Majid and abolished the Caliphate. But in the meanwhile Khilafat agitation poisoned the whole body politic of India.

CHAPTER X.

**Gandhiji intensifies Khilafat agitation with a frenzy
Khilafat and Khaddar reveal Gandhiji and his
Life-mission,
(1921)**

A Khilafat conference was held at Karachi on July 8, 1921. Ali Brothers made some flamboyant speeches there. In their speeches they said that it would be an act of irreligion for a faithful Moslem to serve in the Army as the British Government was hostile to the Caliph of Islam. They were arrested, tried and given long sentences for inciting the Indian Army to disaffection.

Arrest and imprisonment of Ali Brothers led Gandhiji to furious thought. He came to the conclusion that the life and soul of his Non-co-operation strategy depended on the strength and emotional intensity of the Khilafat Movement. Therefore he was determined that the flame of the Khilafat Movement must be kept ablaze. With that end in view, he felt that if he himself be sent to prison for his activities in the Khilafat cause, his Non-co-operation movement would acquire tremendous strength among the Moslems. He was bent on retaining the Moslems under his banner and under his leadership for what he considered his life's mission. Hence, after the imprisonment of Ali Brothers, he himself took their role and stepped into their shoes. At this time Gandhiji was in South India and he repeated the offensive speech of Mohammad Ali in all public meetings there. He did not remain satisfied with his individual action alone but took further steps for broadcasting the speech of Mahammad Ali throughout the country and for associating the Indian National Congress with the Karachi resolution of the Khilafat Conference.

By way of reply to a communique issued by the Governor of Bombay on the subject of prosecution of Ali Brothers, Gandhiji said:

‘ The Governor of Bombay evidently does not know that the Indian National Congress began to *jamper with the loyalty of the Sepoy in September last year, that the central Khilafat Committee began it earlier, and I began it earlier still*, for I must be permitted to take the credit or the odium of suggesting that India had a right openly to tell the Sepoy and everyone who served the Government in any capacity whatsoever that he participated in the wrongs done by the Government. The Conference at Karachi merely repeated the Congress declaration in terms of Islam. How can any one having a spark of humanity in him, and any Mussalman having any pride in his religion, feel otherwise than the Ali Brothers have done? ... *His Excellency must know that the sedition has become the creed of the Congress. Every Non co-operator is pledged to preach disaffection towards the Government established by law.*”

(Tendulkar, Vol. 2, p. 59):

At Trichinopoly he said:

“I was not present at the historic conference at Karachi and had I been present there I should also have been one of those who supported that resolution.” (at p. 59).

At this period of his whirlwind campaign to further the cause of non-co-operation and Khilafat, he took the momentous decision of becoming a half-naked faqir (in the words of Winston Churchill) with only a loin-cloth as his dress. This he did on the 21st September, 1921, while he was in South India, (pp. 59-60, Tendulkar's Mahatma, Vol. 2).

On the 24th September, he issued an appeal to the Muslims: “We must repeat the formula of the Ali Brothers regarding the duty of soldiers and invite imprisonment” (at p. 60).

Thereafter, he called a Conference of Congress leaders at Bombay and himself presided over it. What followed thereafter showed to what extent the Congress leaders had gone in their abdication of reason and subservience to Gandhiji. A

Manifesto was issued as a challenge to the Government under the signature of fifty prominent Congress-men in which the spirit of Mahammad Ali's speech was repeated with this further addition:

"We are also of opinion that it is the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood."
(at p. 60 Tendulkar).

The most amazing thing is that among the fifty signatories occurred the following names amongst others: Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, C. Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and M. R. Jayakar. Later on the Manifesto was ratified by the All-India Congress Committee itself, thus identifying the Congress in full with the activities of the Khilafat leaders.

Thereafter the offensive Karachi resolution of the Khilafat Conference and the above Manifesto were repeated from a thousand platforms all over India. A very interesting conversation on the subject which Mr. Jayakar had with Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, who was Law Member of the Bombay Government at the time, is recorded in Mr. Jayakar's autobiography. Sir Chimanlal said:

"Do you think that I will allow the Government of Bombay to walk into the trap you have laid for it by courting imprisonment by signing the Manifesto to-day? Nothing will happen. None of you will be arrested. You forget that I am a Member of this Government and it will be my duty to prevent it from getting into your trap."
(p. 451, Jayakar, Vol. I).

Lord Reading also, shrewd as he was, did not take any notice of the Manifesto and did not order any arrest.

Over the aforesaid Manifesto of fifty leaders, there had been clash between Gandhiji and the Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore. Tagore was never enamoured of the Non-co-operation mass movement of Gandhiji. When the stories of Jalianwalabagh massacre and of other atrocities became known to the Poet, he

showed his indignation against the Government by renouncing his knighthood. But that was his individual act of Non-co-operation. But he saw the dangerous side of arousing the passions of the ignorant masses and, therefore, he was dead against any mass movement in this respect. He felt that it was his duty to utter a word of caution to Gandhiji and his warning letter was as follows (pp. 252-253, Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas by Rev. C. F. Andrews):

"... Passive Resistance is a force which is not necessarily moral in itself; it can be used against truth as well as for it. The danger inherent in all forces grows stronger when it is likely to gain success, for then it becomes temptation.

* * * * *

"This is why I pray most fervently that nothing which tends to weaken our spiritual freedom may intrude into our marching line; that martyrdom for the cause of truth may never degenerate into fanaticism for mere verbal forms, descending into self-deception that hides itself behind sacred names..."

After getting signatures of all prominent political leaders in the aforesaid Manifesto, Gandhiji became anxious to get the signature of the Poet also. The Poet, however, not only refused to sign the Manifesto inspite of personal pressure from Gandhiji but issued a counter-manifesto of his own severely condemning Gandhian authoritarianism. A very telling paragraph in this counter-manifesto of the Poet ran as follows (See October number of Modern Review, 1921; See also p. 451, Jayakar: p. 61 Tendulkar's Mahatma, Vol. 2):

"An outside influence seemed to be bearing down on the people, grinding them and making one and all speak in the same tone, follow the same groove. Everywhere I was told that culture and reasoning should abdicate, blind obedience only reign.... A cause so great as India's should not be dependent on the will of a single master.... Emotion and enthusiasm is required but also

science and meditation. All the moral forces of the Nation must be called upon. Economists must find practical solutions, educationists must teach, statesmen must ponder and workers work. No pressure, either open or hidden, must weigh on the intelligence."

Tagore's open indictment of Gandhian tactics evoked from Gandhiji a spirited reply tinged with a touch of arrogance and sarcasm. In the concluding portion of his reply Gandhiji said as follows : (p. 263, Mahatma Gandhiji's Ideas by Rev. C. F. Andrews. See also p. 64 Tendulkar's Mahatma, Vol. 2).

"... My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that the Message of Non-co-operation, Non-violence... is a message to the world. It must fall flat if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered."

Cut to the quick by the strong language used by Tagore against Gandhian authoritarianism, Gandhiji, in his reply to the Poet's indictments, blurted out the psychological forces that were working in his mind. Gandhiji was not at all in a penitent or humble mood but took a boastful pride in his actions. He says here clearly that he has a message for the world and before the message can be given to the world, India must receive it and assimilate it. In his letter to Every Briton written during the Second World War, he said that spread of non-violent non-co-operation was his Life's Mission and that he had no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission. His sole object in coming back to India was to make experiments about what he conceived to be his life's mission and for that purpose he brought his Ashramites of Phoenix Park, South Africa, along with him (See Tendulkar. V. 6, p. 186). All activities of Gandhiji from the day he set his feet upon the soil of India were directed towards that aim. Freedom-fight or Hindu-Muslim unity held only a secondary place in his life. He was interested in them so far as they were auxiliary to Gandhian ends. Therefore we find that from 1915 to 1919, while Jinnah was trying to bring the Congress and the League together and was

working incessantly for Hindu-Muslim unity, Gandhiji confined his activities towards the dress-rehearsals of his Passive Resistance activities or Satyagrahas in various places. While the whole country was expressing its admiration for Jinnah's patriotic work, Gandhiji took no notice of Jinnah nor did he show any interest in his work.

Though Gandhiji regularly attended the Congress Sessions annually after his return to India yet he never took any noteworthy part in Congress work till the Amritsar Session of the Congress in 1919. There his attitude was one of caution and moderation. But after he had joined hands with the Khilafat agitators and was assured of a considerable Muslim following, there was a sudden change in his attitude, and he felt that time had come for him to play a leading role in Indian politics. He felt confident that it would not be a difficult task for him to occupy a dominant position in the body-politic of the country as the old Congress leaders, who were too much westernised, had no deep roots in the hearts of the people. Gandhiji brought with him a priceless gift from South Africa. He had learnt by experience that masses are the ultimate source of power, and anybody who can appeal to the passions and emotions of the masses will have the sceptre of leadership at his feet. Leadership through mass-movement was his Master-Plan. Whatever he said or did from the very first day of his landing in India was done in a calculated manner to attain the undisputed leadership of India. With his profound knowledge of human psychology, he came to the deliberate conclusion that to achieve his aim, he must secure for himself the status of a religio-political leader. His mode of living and his loin-cloth had a definite purpose behind them. For 4 or 5 years after his arrival in India he did not take much prominent part in the politics of India but kept himself busy in consolidating his position among the masses. The Indian National Congress was founded on Western ideology and on British Liberalism. Liberal ideas of Locke, Hume, Burke, John Stuart Mill, John Morley etc. were the Bible of the previous Congress politicians. Jinnah used to say that British Liberalism was part of his life. Naturally,

therefore, the Indian masses were out of touch with Indian politics or with the Indian National Congress. Gandhiji definitely shunned the path shown by the previous Indian leaders who were too much anglicised. He was determined to Indianise the Indian politics. For this Gandhiji fully deserves the admiration of every Indian. Indeed he was a great pioneer who showed a new way to the Indian politicians. He set an example before other leaders by associating himself wholeheartedly with the masses, their lives, problems, sentiments and aspirations. In talking to the people he scrupulously avoided any reference to the western ideas or ideology but talked on Ramayan, Mahabharata and Upanishads and on Ram-Rajya. His deliberate merging of himself with the common people intensely strengthened his position and at the same time roused a mass-consciousness as had never been witnessed before. He was already raised to the position of a Mahatma. The result was that at Gandhiji's call the masses responded with their full soul because they felt that here was a leader who was of their own flesh and blood and who spoke to them in their heart's language. Love, respect and the devotion of the masses placed him at the pinnacle of power. Gradually, political leaders far above him in education and intellectual capacity, came under his political influence and virtually placed themselves at his service to work under his guidance and even subordinated their judgments to his. In this group, the foremost man was Pandit Motilal Nehru who surrendered himself to Gandhiji as soon as the latter formulated his Non-co-operation programme during the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in September, 1920. Another notable capture of Gandhiji was Vallabhbhai Patel (he was not yet Sardar Patel), a well-known criminal lawyer of Ahmedabad who became his chief adjutant. He took up the organisational side of Gandhiji's plans. Gandhiji was fortunate in having him at the head of his organisation, as his organising ability had rarely been surpassed. Vallabhbhai Patel was not yet known outside the circle of Ahmedabad but Pandit Motilal Nehru was an all-India figure. He may be said to be the Herald of Gandhian era in Indian politics. When he

with his Harrow and Cambridge educated son Jawaharlal came under his banner Gandhism received its greatest impetus.

Hindu masses were already at the feet of the Mahatma and the Khilafat Movement brought the Muslim masses also under his banner. With the united Hindu-Muslim fanaticism behind him, he hoped to be invincible and the Gandhian hegemony in India to be complete. He had no use for Jinnah, but Mahammad Ali, Shaukat Ali and Maulana Azad were useful to him. He had no use for Mrs. Besant who led a dedicated life for India. He had no use for the stern and adamant Subhas, but the pliant Jawaharlal was very useful to him. He employed every conceivable means to raise Jawaharlal to the pinnacles of power and at the same time did not hesitate to stoop low for the purpose of political ruination of Subhas.

Now, a word must be said for Gandhiji's khaddar-cult together with his insistence on hand-spinning. This cult is not so innocent as it apparently looks. Gandhiji was not satisfied by merely directing that all Congress-men must wear khaddar but he had also enjoined that none should be allowed to be a member of the Indian National Congress who did not spin regularly with his own hands. Tagore wrote to Gandhiji that he felt that hand-spinning was a very useful accessory occupation for a villager but why insist that everybody, whether a townsman or a villager, must do hand-spinning? For one man it may be useful but for another a sheer waste of time. The Poet said that he could not understand Gandhiji's over-all stress upon hand-spinning by everybody and he particularly protested against the peremptory direction of Gandhiji that no one could be a member of the Indian National Congress unless he regularly spun with his own hands. The Poet characterised this direction as an interference with freedom of thought and action. In an uncompromising reply to the Poet, Gandhiji wrote: "I do, indeed, ask the Poet and sage to spin the wheel as a sacrament." Tagore's first impression of Gandhiji's Sabarmati Asram was as follows (Jayakar, p. 373):

"... What a wilderness of white colour ; the walls of the buildings are white, the river sands are white, the Khaddar is white, everything is white at the Asram. Mark you, before long it will develop into a political cult as intolerant and tyrannical as the civilisation born of the sandy deserts of Arabia. The white colour is a colour of intolerance. Gandhi has adopted it ; it will have its consequence."

Gandhiji did not invent his white khaddar-cult merely for the altruistic benefit of hungry millions but he had ulterior motives behind this cult and these were to further the cause of Gandhian ambitions. It was to be the battle-dress of the Gandhian faithfuls, the Swiss Guards of the Gandhian Papacy. Hand-spinning for hours was meant to regulate and control the thoughts of the spinners—a sort of brain-washing exercise. Its result would be that the spinners will unconsciously think in unison with the Gandhian thoughts and will be converted into Gandhian automatons to do or die according to the wishes of Gandhiji. Thousands of Gandhian workers, whom he called constructive workers acted strictly according to Gandhian injunctions and constituted the nucleus of the non-violent fighters of Gandhism.

In the early days of his career, Gandhiji was a democrat and called the Congress the mouthpiece of the nation where everyone was entitled to express his own views. When he made his first attempt to convert the Congress to his non-co-operation programme, he said :

"I am told that I have been doing nothing but wreckage and that by bringing forward the resolution I am breaking up the political life of the country. The Congress is not a party organisation. It ought to provide a platform for all shades of opinion, and a minority need not leave this organisation, but may look forward to translate into a majority, in course of time, if its opinion commended itself to the country, (Tendulkar, p. 12, Vol. 2)."

But with his meteoric success, he became a changed man and tried to exclude everybody from the Congress who had

not subscribed to Gandhian ways. It became a rule that before a man could have entry into the Congress he must prove, by hand-spinning and khaddar-wearing that he is a Gandhian Faithful.

Here we want to draw the attention of the reader to a speech made by Gandhiji at the Ramgarh Session of the Indian National Congress in 1940, when he gave the following clarion call to the Congress. The said speech may be almost termed as Gandhiji's battle-cry and is as follows: pp. 174-175, History of Congress, Vol. II, Pattabhi Sitaramayya):

"We are not only a democratic organisation but we are also a fighting organisation... When we march as an army we are no longer a democracy. As soldiers we have got to take orders from the General and obey them implicitly. His word must be law. I am your General... When you appoint me as your General you must obey my command. There will be no argument about it... They are not to reason why."

"My mind is wholly concentrated on trying this experiment with your help and support, *because it will help not only India but the whole world....*"

"Every Congress Committee must, therefore, become a unit of Satyagraha. To that extent democracy comes to an end. To that extent a democratic organisation like ours will have to follow explicitly my instructions."

"Every Congress Committee should become Satyagraha Committee and register such Congressmen...who would spin regularly and who habitually use khaddar to the exclusion of all other cloth. These Satyagraha Committees would become busy spinning-depots. They will work in conjunction with and under the guidance of A. I. C. C. branches in a business-like manner so that there remain in the jurisdiction of the Committees no Congress-men who have not adopted Khaddar for exclusive use."

Gandhiji was indeed playing for the highest imaginable stakes, and he cherished a Caesarian ambition. His ambition was to found a Holy Gandhian Empire in India, and to be its Pope. Literal meaning of Pope is Papa or Bapu. It is to be noted that he began to call himself 'Bapu' and sign his letters as Bapu. The appropriation of the use of this word to himself is a pointer to the direction of his ambition—to be the Bapu of the New India and thereafter to be the Bapu of the world. For the achievement of his ambitions, the fanatical obedience of Hindu-Muslim masses towards him was the first requirement, and if he could secure, that, then the mighty British Government would be powerless before him and it would be compelled to quit India. Then his khaddar-clad battalion, duly brain-washed by continuous hand-spinning, would form his Swiss-Guard to establish and protect the Gandhian Papacy in India.

After establishing Holy Gandhian Empire in India, he would have ventured to conquer new fields for Gandhism. It was the dream, aim and ambition of Gandhiji to convert the whole world to the path of Gandhism. This idea was at the back of his mind when he wrote to Poet Tagore in 1921:

“My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that message of Non-co-operation and Non-violence is a message to the world.”

He reiterated this idea in an article in '*Young India*,' dated January 12, 1928 (see Tendulkar, p. 327, Vol. II):

“My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the delivery of India, I seek to deliver the so-called subject races of the earth from the crushing heels of western exploitation in which England is the greatest partner. If India converts, as it can, Englishmen, it can become the predominant partner in a world-Commonwealth of which England can have the privilege of becoming a partner, if she chooses. India has the right, if she only knew, of becoming the predominant partner, by reason of her numbers, geographical position and culture inherited for ages. This is a big talk, I know.

For a fallen India to aspire to move the world and protect the weaker races is seemingly an impertinence. But, *I can no longer hide the light under a bushel. Mine is an ambition worth living for and worth dying for...*"

Now let us see to what Utopia or Heaven Gandhiji wanted to lead India. Gandhiji formulated his outlook on the modern world in a book "Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule" which was published in 1909. Some extracts from the said book are given below:

"It is not the British people who are ruling India but it is modern civilisation, through its railways, telegraphs, telephones, and almost every invention which has been claimed to be a triumph of civilisation. Bombay, Calcutta and other chief cities of India are the real plague spots. If British Rule were replaced tomorrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better off, except that she would be able to retain some of the money that is drained away to England; but then India would only become a second or fifth nation of Europe or America...

"Medical science is the concentrated essence of black magic. Quackery is infinitely preferable to what passes for high medical skill as such. Hospitals are instruments that the devil has been using for his own purpose, in order to keep his hold on his kingdom. They perpetuate vice, misery and degradation and real slavery ... If there were no hospitals for venereal diseases, or even for consumptives, we should have less consumptions and less sexual vice among us.

"India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the past fifty years or so. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors and such like have all to go."

CHAPTER XI

Congress Surrenders to Gandhiji : Jinnah Leaves the Congress (1920)

When the Non-co-operation movement was inaugurated on the 1st August, 1920, by Gandhiji, the Indian National Congress as such had no concern with it. The movement was started on his own initiative without any support or approval of the Congress. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya uttered words of warning against the course of action taken by Gandhiji without waiting for the verdict of the Congress. Gandhiji's reply was:

"There are moments in your life when you must act, even though you cannot carry your best friends with you. The 'still voice' within you must always be the final arbiter when there is a conflict of duty... When one has an unshakable faith in a particular policy or action, it would be folly to wait for the Congress pronouncement."

(Tendulkar, p. 2, Vol. II).

Gandhiji now became anxious that the Congress also should adopt his Non-co-operation programme. But already there was some opposition in the country to his programme of boycott of Councils and schools and colleges. Bengal and Maharastra politicians were not enthusiastic. The Indian National Congress as well as the Muslim League held their Special Sessions at Calcutta in September, 1920 to consider Gandhiji's programme. That both these great organisations held their sessions simultaneously at the same place was due to the earnest efforts of Jinnah to chalk out a common programme for both. Gandhiji was, however, interested only in his Non-Co-operation programme and in nothing else, and he was determined to capture the Congress for his own ends. In this Special Session of the Congress with Lala Lajpat Rai as the President, Gandhiji personally moved the resolution dealing with the question of non-co-operation. He proposed the adoption by the Congress of a policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation which would begin with the renunciation of titles bestowed by the Government and with the triple boycott

(namely, the boycott of legislatures, law-courts and educational institutions) and would end in non-payment of taxes. He enthused the audience by boldly declaring 'If there is a sufficient response to my scheme, I make bold to reiterate my statement that you can gain Swaraj in the course of the year (Tendulkar, p. 12, V. 2). Gandhiji received the greatest support from Pandit Motilal Nehru who was the first man among the leaders to come under his banner, while a formidable group of politicians led by C. R. Das were arrayed against him. But, in spite of strong opposition from the older section of the leaders, Gandhiji's motion was carried by a large majority. Out of the total 2728 votes, 1855 votes were cast in favour of Gandhiji.

Jinnah opposed Gandhiji's resolution of non-co-operation. He advised caution and restraint. Gandhiji, however, appealed to religious fanaticism of his audience, particularly to the Muslim section of it and said—"This is a religious position. In Islam they consider it sinful for them to go to the Councils and take the oath of allegiance. Let not practical India and practical politicians, who gather here from year to year, forget this settled fact."

It is to be particularly noted that in the Subjects Committee of the Congress, all Muslim delegates, except Jinnah, voted with Gandhiji. Nothing could swerve Jinnah from the constitutional path he chalked out for himself, even if it made him unpopular among his co-religionists.

Elated with the success in the voting, Gandhiji said as follows: (Tendulkar, p. 14, Vol .2):

"An analysis of the votes shows that the country wants non-co-operation... The majority has taken upon its shoulders a tremendous responsibility. Every individual voter in favour of my proposal has certainly bound himself, if he is a parent, to withdraw his children from schools or colleges subject in any way to Government control. Every voter being lawyer is bound at the earliest opportunity to suspend his practice and promote the cause of settlement of disputes by private arbitration.

... Every delegate voting with the majority has bound himself to stimulate hand-spinning and hand-weaving and in his own person to use hand-spun and hand-woven cloth."

Later on, he said—

"I do not rely merely upon the lawyer class or highly educated men to carry out all the stages of non-co-operation. My hope is more with the masses, so far as the later stages of non-co-operation are concerned."

When Gandhiji inaugurated the Non-Co-operation movement, Poet Rabindranath Tagore was in Europe. He disliked the idea of negation contained in non-co-operation. He was very much perturbed by the course which the Non-Co-operation movement was taking in India. From Europe he expressed his anxiety in the following words (Tendulkar, p. 44, Vol. 2):

"We need all the moral forces which Mahatma Gandhi represents and which he alone in the world can represent... (But) it is criminal to transpose moral force into force. My prayer is that India may represent the co-operation of all the peoples of the world. For India, unity is truth, and division evil. Unity is that which embraces and understands everything; consequently, it cannot be attained through negation. The present attempts to separate our spirit from that of the Occident is tantamount to spiritual suicide. The present age has been dominated by the Occident, because the Occident has a mission to fulfil. We of the Orient should learn from the Occident. No nation can find its own salvation by breaking away from others."

Gandhiji's reply was—

(at p. 45).

"The present struggle is being waged against compulsory , against one-sided combination, against armed imposition of modern methods of exploitation masquerading under the name of civilization. ... Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing."

The Calcutta Session of the Congress held in September was a Special Session to consider the feasibility of the Gandhian programme of Non-Co-operation.

Then came the regular annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December, 1920. Great interest was aroused in Gandhiji's Non-co-operation resolution. A record number of delegates attended the session. It was known that the President-Designate of the year, C. Vijayraghavachariar and the immediate past-President Lala Lajpat Rai were lukewarm on the subject of Non-co-operation. Maharashtra's opposition was intense as appeared in a manifesto circulated by G. S. Khaparde, on behalf of the Congress Democratic Party founded by Lokamanya Tilak. C. R. Das had come with a large Bengal contingent to cross swords with Gandhiji on the Non-Co-operation resolution. But there was a somersault on his part and he surrendered to Gandhiji. With the surrender of C. R. Das it seemed that the resolution would be passed unanimously amidst general acclamation. But there arose a man of steel nerves to express his dissent, and he was no other than Mahammad Ali Jinnah, the old Guard, the Great Sentinel of the old Indian National Congress of Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. During his speech when he referred to Gandhiji and Mahammad Ali as Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Mahammad Ali, there was tremendous uproar among the audience who shouted that Mr. Jinnah must prefix Mahatma and Maulana whenever he mentioned the names of Gandhiji and Mahammad Ali. Jinnah refused to be coerced and was shouted down.

This was the last Congress meeting in which Jinnah actively participated. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has described the departure of Jinnah from the Congress in the following words:

"A few old leaders, however, dropped out of the Congress after Calcutta (? this must be a mistake for Nagpur) and among those a popular and well-known figure was that of Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Sarojini Naidu called him 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity,' and he had been largely responsible in the past for bringing

the Muslim League nearer to the Congress. But the new developments in the Congress—Non-Co-operation and the new constitution which made it more of a popular and mass organisation—were thoroughly disapproved by him. He disagreed on political grounds... Temperamentally he did not fit in at all with the new Congress. He felt completely out of his element in the *khadi-clad* crowd demanding speeches in Hindustani. The enthusiasm of the people outside struck him as *mob-hysteria*."

The character of the Gandhian Congress frightened the Liberals. Shrinivasa Sastri in an open letter said as follows:

"In spite of discussions of many friends of our party, I have been attending the sessions of the Indian National Congress whenever I could. My experience, however, has been most disheartening. Every session since the Special meeting in Bombay in 1918 has outdone its predecessor in the adoption of impracticable programme, in unreasoning opposition to Government. So long as there was the slightest hope left, some of us felt it a duty to warn our reckless countrymen against the perils of the course along which they were drifting. That excuse is no longer there after the Non-co-operation movement began." (Tendulkar, p. 31, Vol. 2).

When Gandhiji requested Jinnah to rally under the banner of Non-Co-operation, Jinnah's reply was as follows:

"I thank you for your kind suggestion offering me to take my share in the new life that has opened up before the country. If by 'New Life' you mean your methods and your programme, I am afraid I cannot accept them; for I am fully convinced that it must lead to disaster... your methods have already caused splits and division in almost every institution that you have approached hitherto, and in the public life of the country...and your extreme programme has for the moment

struck the imagination mostly of the inexperienced youth and the ignorant and the illiterate. All this means complete disorganisation and chaos. What the consequence of this may be, I shudder to contemplate." (Jinnah by M.H.S. pp. 264-265).

CHAPTER XII

Gandhiji gives a Call to the Students to come out of Schools and Colleges—Strong Protest from Tagore and Jinnah (1920-21)

The main idea of Non-co-operation was that the Government must be paralysed. Important centres of activity of the Government were in schools and colleges and in Law Courts, and under Gandhiji's plan of action these were to be boycotted. He said that the education, imparted in schools and colleges aided and controlled by the Government, produces slave mentality. Therefore, this must be destroyed. Destruction must come first, then construction would be made on a new basis. He said that the schools and colleges must be emptied, 'let students remain idle rather than receive education poisoned by the touch of foreign Government.' (Jayakar, p. 369). The worst thing that Gandhiji did was to make an emotional appeal to the self-respect of the students (Jayakar, p. 369). Such an appeal coming from Gandhiji himself had disastrous effects on the students—thousands and thousands of them came out of their schools and colleges and loafed about the streets, with a vague ambition to do patriotic things at the behest of Gandhiji. In Calcutta, one man stood like a solid rock against the advancing tide of Gandhian attack on education. He was no other than the Tiger of Bengal, the great Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. Bengal and its youth will always cherish with gratitude the memory of Sir Asutosh who tried his best to save the students of Bengal from Gandhian attacks. A few years later when Sir Asutosh died in 1924, the entire student community of Bengal went in mourning for him.

Jinnah also took a firm stand against Gandhiji in this respect. He was much perturbed at the latter's exploitation of students for his Non-co-operation movement. As the unruly

Congress mob did not allow Jinnah to finish his speech at the Nagpur Congress, he took an opportunity of explaining his views on the Non-co-operation movement, particularly the destructive aspect of the movement as it affected the student world, in a meeting at the Fergusson College, Poona, on the occasion of the 6th Death Anniversary of Gokhale. Jinnah had the greatest respect for Gokhale and rarely missed Gokhale Death Anniversary occasions. In the said meeting he said that with all respects to Gandhiji he was honestly and sincerely convinced in his mind that the political and educational aspects of the Non-co-operation programmes were suicidal and harmful in every respect. In his opinion, what was wanted was a real political movement based on real political principles and based on the fire which burnt in the heart of every man for his motherland. So long as Indian politics had not that basis, it was bound to go in wrong lines. He said that when they (Gandhiji and his co-workers) were preaching non-violent non-co-operation they were forgetting human nature, they were forgetting that they were human beings and not saints, and it was futile to apply soul-force for solution of political problems. The boys were asked to come out of the Government-aided schools and colleges, but he asked what would they do after withdrawing themselves from schools and colleges? Mr. Gandhi had asked them to spin the wheel for four or five hours a day and then if any time was available to devote it to learn Hindi. Would any father like to ruin the career of his young son in this way? Further, Mr. Gandhi had asked the youth of the country to come out of the schools and colleges and then go to the villages. Mr. Jinnah asked what would these young people do there. A young voice from the audience replied that they would educate the villagers. Mr. Jinnah retorted—"Young man, take it from me, the villagers know things better than you."

Tagore also expressed great concern over the exploitation of young students by Gandhiji, and wrote strongly on the subject. Gandhiji's reply to Tagore's denunciation was as follows:

"The poet's concern is largely about students. He is of opinion that they should not have been called upon

to give up Government schools before they had other schools to go to. Here I must differ from him. I have never been able to make a fetish of literary training. My experience has proved that by itself it adds not an inch to one's moral height...

"... But the poet's protest against the calling out of the students is really a corollary to his objection to the very doctrine of Non-co-operation.....

"... Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing."

"And, if India is ever to attain Swaraj of Poet's dream, she will do so only by Non-violent Non-co-operation..." (pp. 266-268, Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas by Rev. C. F. Andrews).

Gandhiji has called his autobiography 'My Experiments with Truth.' His sons were also made objects of his experiment. They were not given any school-education whatever in their young days because Gandhiji had a low opinion about school-education. He said that he preferred disciplined home education to school-education. Gandhiji says:

"Often have I been confronted with various posers from friends: what harm had there been, if I had given my boys an academical education? What right had I thus to clip their wings? Why should I have come in the way of their taking degrees and choosing their own careers?"

Gandhiji has answered these questions in the following words:

"I am of opinion that, if I had insisted on their being educated somehow at public schools, they would have been deprived of the training that can be had only at the school of experience, or from constant contact with the parents. I should never have been free, as I am today, from anxiety on their score, and the artificial education that they could have had in England or South Africa, torn from me, would never have taught them the

simplicity and the spirit of service that they show in their lives today, while their artificial ways of living might have a serious handicap in my public work..."

Gandhiji has added a very significant paragraph in his autobiography in this connection:

"The Youths whom I called out in 1920 from those citadels of slavery—their schools and colleges—and whom I advised that it was far better to remain unlettered and break stones for the sake of liberty than to go in for a literary education in the chain of slaves, will probably be able now to trace my advice to its source."

Mr. Jayakar, a rising star of the Bombay High Court Bar was an admirer of Gandhiji and a cool-headed enthusiast in his cause. In response to Gandhiji's appeal he suspended his practice in the Bombay High Court. He was keen on doing some constructive work and he endeavoured to establish a well-equipped National College in Bombay, competing on fair terms with the existing Colleges, Elphinstone, Wilson and St. Xaviers. Gandhiji promised one lakh of rupees to Jayakar for the purpose. Choitram Gidwani, one of the trusted lieutenants of Gandhiji, brought a message from him to Jayakar. He said: "If you want money from Gandhiji, your proposed College must satisfy the following conditions:

- (1) The students must not use chairs and benches but must sit on gunny carpets;
- (2) They must devote two to three hours a day to Charkha-spinning;
- (3) Every week-end, they must go to the villages and reach Non-co-operation on the basis of two books:
 - (a) Mazzini's Life of Garibaldi; and
 - (b) Fenner Brockway's work on Non-co-operation.

Mr. Jayakar replied:

"There are no villages round about Bombay, but only suburbs. Secondly, gunny carpets would not sui

Bombay's atmosphere. But why be dogmatic about such a trifle? Remember, that we are competing against well-equipped Colleges like Elphinstone, Wilson and St. Xaviers. Parsees, Muslims and other communities, not wedded to Gandhi's doctrine, will send their children. If my College is to succeed, its environments and conditions must be nearly the same as in other Bombay Colleges though the nature of the teaching might be different. Besides, why attach so much importance to seating arrangements? As for spinning the Charkha for two to three hours a day, it is impossible. In my time-table, I am giving you one hour a day which is sufficient. As for boys going out on week-ends to preach Non-co-operation, it will not be permitted by their parents. Why force raw children into this political work? They will be clapped in jail within a fortnight. Parents do not send their children to College for delivering political speeches leading to imprisonment. Why don't you do that work, you political leaders, instead of compelling inexperienced boys to do it."

"To this, Gidwani's reply was that his terms were definite, and, if I was not prepared to accept them, the Congress would not give a farthing."

Mr. Jayakar continues—

"After this, it was difficult to continue the effort and on Saturday, 29th January, a final break took place with Gidwani and the project of the proposed College came to an end, which was a great pity. There was an obvious somersault on the part of Gandhi, and other prominent Congressmen in Bombay. Their original views were completely altered. I saw difficulty in agreeing to their conditions, totally unsuitable to a College in Bombay intended to be a rival to well-equipped and flourishing institutions of long standing. I preferred to retain my independence rather than be tied to the apron strings of people who had no idea of the educational environ-

ments and requirements of a cosmopolitan city like Bombay. Coalition with such a group only meant a weakening and the ruin of my cause. Honestly, I was not able to see eye-to-eye with these people in regard to the students' problem and most of their activities appeared to me to be misguided and destructive, with no constructive element in them. Their effort was being guided by hatred and aversion. Their speeches were most provocative against men with different political views....."

"Thus my project failed. The staff of teachers I had gathered was dispersed, the professors I had invited to Bombay for help in my proposed College returned home cancelling their leave, the friendly warning and forebodings of my critics came true and the prophetic speeches of the Presidents of the Calcutta and Nagpur Congress sessions proved more Cassandra-like than they had appeared at the time of their delivery." (pp. 429-430, *The Story of My Life* by Jayakar).

The Gandhian ideas on the use of spinning in educational institutions are given at page 57, Vol. I, of PattabhiSitaramayya's *History of the Congress*:

"Imagine six million school children and college youths spinning yarn for two hours a day. That would produce mountains of yarn and yield oceans of cloth which would make schools a revenue-yielding proposition. When, therefore, schools become self-supporting ...they would support Government instead of Government supporting them."

Brilliant young students left schools and colleges in obedience to Gandhiji's call only to find later that they had lost their moorings. In experimenting with his ideas, was it morally right to give this call to the ardent, immature youths? Sri Prakasha, a leading Congressman, later on Governor of Madras and Bombay, has contributed an article to the *Illustrated Weekly of India* (12th August, 1962) on this question:

The questions, as posed by my son, are still unanswered... Was it right for the great leaders of the day to utilise students in their political agitation and interfere with their studies? Was it right to disturb the even tenor of educational institutions? Was it proper for those who had followed the dictates of their leaders to be left in the lurch when Swaraj came, while those who had defied their mandates and entered into office remained securely there? Was it proper for those who could afford it to short-circuit 'the letter of law' and get their children educated at home and abroad because they could say that they went to institutions which were not aided by or under the control of the British Government of India which was all that the Congress directives said? Was it proper for any person with family responsibilities—specially of motherless young children—to neglect them and plunge into public agitations not even sure if he was only amusing himself or was really working for any great cause?

These questions trouble me as much as they troubled my son; only he suffered in his own person and I did not. If any have answers to give, I should be glad to have them. I know many other young men have suffered more than my son, and many fathers have had greater losses to bear than I."

CHAPTER XIII

Tilak and Gandhiji (1919-1920)

When after his alliance with the Khilafat leaders, Gandhiji was propagating his ideas about the Non-violent Non-Co-operation, Lokamanya Tilak was still in the land of living and there has been controversy on the point whether Tilak approved the ideas of Non-Co-operation. Gandhiji himself has recorded his impressions of Tilak's attitude (Vide Tendulkar, Vol. 2, p. 48):

"I am conscious that my method is not Mr. Tilak's method... but I sincerely think that Mr. Tilak did not disbelieve my method... his last word to me in the presence of several friends was, just a fortnight before his death, that mine was an excellent method, if the people could be persuaded to take to it. But he said he had doubts..."

There is another record of the same interview (Jayakar, Story of My Life, p. 386, Vol. I):

"There was a meeting at Sardar Griha, a fortnight before Tilak's death. Gandhi, Shaikat Ali and some other leaders were present. Gandhi was of opinion that Non-Co-operation was perfectly constitutional. Tilak replied:

'I consider armed revolt also constitutional. The only difficulty is, at present it is not possible. If anyone were to assure me that armed revolt would be successful to the extent of even eight annas in the rupee, I would start the revolt, trusting God to give me success to the extent of the remaining eight annas. But today, to the extent of even four annas we are not prepared and there is no certainty.'

Tilak pointed out some practical difficulties in the path of Non-Co-operation and cautioned those who thought that the

Non-co-operation movement could be carried on in a non-violent manner. Tilak's words were (p. 387):

"Take, for instance, one of Gandhi's weapons, viz., 'Hartal.' Gandhi shudders at the word 'blood-shed,' but who can guarantee that 'Hartal' will not lead to bloodshed contrary to his wishes. Because, 'Hartal,' if successful, diminishes the prestige of the Government. Therefore, the Officials will try every means to break the 'Hartal.' They will use domination and force upon the shop-keepers. They will cause altercations with other shop-keepers, who do not open their shops. People will gather to watch the quarrel and the police on the watch will interfere, break the crowd and if the people do not disperse by peaceful means, shooting will occur and a few people will be wounded."

From the above, it is quite clear that Tilak was rather sceptic about Gandhiji's Non-co-operation programme. In Gandhiji's own words, Tilak had 'doubts.' Nevertheless he utilised Tilak's name and fame for his own ends. He created a Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund whose target was to raise one crore of rupees. Its immediate purpose was to put on the Congress register one crore members, and introduce in villages and cities twenty lakhs of spinning wheels (See Tendulkar, p. 34, Vol. 2).

Tilak definitely disapproved of Gandhiji's getting mixed up with the Khilafat movement (p. 388, Jayakar's book): Sadasiv Vaman Bapat's reminiscences are as follows:

"Tilak wanted the national movement of India to keep entirely free from all contamination with any theological or foreign political questions. He foresaw, as if by prophetic vision, the frightful consequences resulting from accepting the Khilafat dispute and he warned us all against it. To those Hindu Nationalists who said that they did not believe a word of this Khilafat but still had agreed to agitate for it only to secure the friendship

and active co-operation of the Muslims in our national fight for freedom, Tilak had only one reply that if the Hindus think that they will succeed in deceiving the Muslims, they will soon be disillusioned and will find that they will succeed in deceiving themselves only but not the Muslims, who are very shrewd at the diplomatic table. Let us not, therefore, confound issues. Let us seek Muslim co-operation on the broad national question of Swaraj. In that, by all means, give them special privileges if these will satisfy them and bring them into the Congress fold, but never seek to introduce theology into our politics."

Tilak's views about Gandhian Satyagraha and fasting are very interesting. They show that Tilak was very sceptic about the innovation which Gandhiji brought into Indian politics. Here are some reminiscences of Tilak by late A. R. Argarkar given in ('Jayakar's Story of My Life.' p. 387):

"Tilak asked me: 'What is Gandhi's caste?' I replied: 'Gandhi is a Vaisya by caste and a Vaisnava by religion.' Tilak looked surprised and replied: 'It is strange that up to now I did not know Gandhi's religion. People will laugh at my ignorance about such a great man. I was under the impression that Gandhi was a Jain, because all his opinions and teachings savour of the Jain religion—Non-violence, Satyagraha, Fasting etc. All these are more in keeping with Jain teachings than the Hindu religion. But these means are of no use in politics which is required to change its attitude from time to time. Exalted religious principles or abstract doctrines about truth are not of much value in the present political game. I don't think that Satyagraha and Fasting will have the least effect upon the mind of our rulers who are adepts in political warfare.'..."

CHAPTER XIV

Gandhiji Celebrates First Death Anniversary of Tilak (1921)

Lokamanya Tilak died in the night of 31st July, 1920. When the said date arrived next year, Gandhiji decided to celebrate it in his own way. How he did it is described by Tendulkar as follows:

“On July 31, Gandhiji ceremoniously celebrated the bonfire of foreign cloth at Umar Sobhani's Yard at Parel Bombay—spectacular scene witnessed by thousands of citizens. As the flame leaped up and enveloped the whole pyramid, there was a shout of joy resounding through the air as if India's shackles had been broken asunder. It was not rags that were burnt but some of the finest saris, shirts and jackets were consigned to the flames. In some cases, the choicest silks kept by mothers for their daughters' wedding were given up for burning. No less than one lakh and a half pieces of foreign cloth were consigned to the flames.” (Tendulkar, p. 53, Vol. 2).

Next day, Gandhiji addressed cheering crowd as follows:

“Bombay Beautiful lit yesterday a fire which must remain for ever alive, even as in a Parsi temple, and which must continually burn all our pollutions, as yesterday we burnt our greatest outward pollution, our foreign clothing. Let it be a token of our determination never to touch foreign cloth..... It was the true and necessary sacrificial fire we lit yesterday.”

The religious sermon which Gandhiji preached on the occasion had no effect on the minds of the masses. They responded with a different spirit, perhaps not unexpected by Gandhiji. The reactions of the masses have been described by Rev. C. F. Andrews in the following words (Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas by C. F. A. page 269):

“... the excited encouragement of repeated actions of this kind by Mr. Gandhi himself in all parts of the country, and especially at Bombay, soon led on to further violence. For instance, the crowd which gathered to the Burning of Foreign Cloth on one occasion, in Bombay, was so great that it was estimated at over a hundred thousand, and a wave of rowdyism from that time forward began to run through the city...”

Gandhiji's personal part in the burning of foreign cloth and the intolerance showed by Gandhiji distressed Andrews very much and in his distressed state of mind he wrote a beautiful and pathetic letter to Gandhiji (Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas by Andrews, page 270):

“I know that your Burning of the Foreign Cloth is with the idea of helping the poor; but I feel that you have gone wrong... The picture of your lighting that pile including delicate fabrics shocked me intensely. We seem to be losing sight of the great outside world to which we belong and concentrating selfishly on India; and this must, I fear, lead back to the old, bad, selfish nationalism. If so, we get into the vicious circle from which Europe is trying so desperately to escape...”

“I was supremely happy when you were dealing giant blows at the fundamental moral evils—drunkenness, untouchability, race arrogance etc. But lighting bonfires of foreign cloth and telling people that it is a religious sin to wear it, destroying in the fire the noble handiwork of one's own fellow-men and women, of one's brothers and sisters abroad, saying it would be defiling to use it—I cannot tell how different all this appears to me. Do you know I almost fear now to wear the khaddar that you have given me, lest I should appear to be judging other people, as a Pharisee would, saying—‘I am holier than thou.’ I never felt like this before.

“You know how, when anything that you do hurts me, I must cry out to you, and this has hurt me.”

Gandhiji's reply to Andrews was as follows: (pp. 271-74 of the same book).

"I remain as convinced as ever of the necessity of burning...

"Destruction is the quickest method of stimulating production. By one supreme effort and swift destruction, India has to be awakened from her torpor and enforced idleness.

"I must be the same to friend and foe. And it is this conviction which makes me so sure of so many of my acts which often puzzle friends.

"I remember having thrown into the sea a pair of beautiful field-glasses, because they were a constant bone of contention between a dear friend and myself. He felt the hesitation at first, but he saw the right of the destruction of a beautiful and costly thing, a present withal from a friend. Experience shows that the richest gifts must be destroyed without compensation and hesitation if they hinder one's moral progress. Will it not be held a sacred duty to consign to the flames most precious heir-looms, if they are plague-infected? I can remember having broken ~~to~~ bits, when a young man, the loved bangles of my own dear wife, because they were a matter of difference between us. And, if I remember aright, they were a gift from her mother. I did it, not out of hate, but out of love—ignorant, I now see in my ripe old age. The destruction helped us and brought us nearer."

Nowhere 'Gandhiji's characteristic intolerance is shown more forcefully than in the incident on board the ship referred to above in Gandhiji's reply. Mr. Kallenbach, a German and an architect by profession, came under the spell of Gandhiji in South Africa. He was a man of means and was used to luxurious living, but after coming in contact with Gandhiji, he placed his considerable fortune at the disposal of Gandhiji and adopted a simple mode of living. It was with his financial help

that Gandhiji built up his various Ashrams in South Africa. When Gandhiji left the shores of South Africa for the last time for India in July, 1914, Mr. Kallenbach accompanied him. This trustful simple soul had one or two costly pairs of binoculars and he was very fond of them. Gandhiji was anxious to teach the poor fellow the lesson of non-attachment and non-possession. How Gandhiji did it is related below in his own words in his autobiography (p. 421):

“Mr. Kallenbach was very fond of binoculars, and he had one or two costly pairs. We had daily discussions over one of these. I tried to impress on him, that this possession was not in keeping with the ideal of simplicity that we aspired to reach. Our discussions came to a head one day, as we were standing near the porthole of our cabin.

‘Rather than allow these to be a bone of contention between us, why not throw them into the sea, and be done with them’ said I.

‘Certainly throw the wretched things away, said Mr. Kallenbach.’

‘I mean it’ said I.

‘So do I,’ quickly came the reply.

And forthwith I flung them into the sea. They were worth some £7, but their value lay less in their price than in Mr. Kallenbach’s infatuation for them. However, having got rid of them, he never regretted it.”

Gandhiji’s heart was not at rest until he could destroy the costly binoculars with his own hands. He was a veritable destroyer who revelled in destruction. He was not slow to find excuses for his destructive activities and his curious soliloquy on the aforesaid incident as follows:

“Every day we had to learn something new in this way, for both of us were trying to tread the path of Truth. In the march towards Truth, anger, selfishness, hatred etc. naturally give way ... A successful search for

Truth means complete deliverance from the dual throng such as of love and hate, happiness and misery."

That was Gandhi.

Christ's faithful apostle, Rev. C. F. Andrews, was a simple and trustful soul with a child's heart. He had not the capacity to understand the intricacies of Gandhian mind and Gandhian moves. Hence after witnessing the bonfire of valuable and expensive foreign cloths at Bombay, his sensitive and innocent soul was deeply moved and with deep pain in his heart he made his mild and respectful protest to Gandhiji. He did not understand that Gandhiji was playing a deep game while celebrating Tilak's Death Anniversary in the manner he did. Tilak was a popular hero whose memory roused emotions of love and respect among the people. Tilak's Death Anniversary gave Gandhiji a great opportunity of harnessing popular emotion and popular upsurge to his own chariot. This bonfire of cloths on that day was merely a step towards the Gandhian end.

CHAPTER XV

C. R. Das and Gandhiji (1917-1925)

C. R. Das came into politics late in life. Though his active political career consisted barely of five years, his rise had been phenomenal. He took to the Congress politics in 1917 when he found that Surendra Nath Banerjee and Baikuntha Nath Sen, the Moderate leaders of Bengal, opposed the election of Mrs. Anne Besant as the President of the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, which was to be held in December, 1917. C. R. Das threw his whole weight in favour of Mrs. Besant and got her elected as the President of the Congress. The election of Mrs. Besant was the first successful challenge to the political leadership of Surendra Nath Banerjee in Bengal. Henceforth the new star in the political firmament of Bengal was C. R. Das and the ascendancy of the Moderate Leaders of Bengal began to wane. C. R. Das plunged into the political movement of his time with his characteristic reckless abandon, sacrificing everything which an ordinary mortal thinks to be valuable. When he died in 1925 (June 16), whatever worldly possessions he still had were left to the nation.

In the Amritsar Congress of 1919, there was a clash between Gandhiji and C. R. Das about the new Reforms (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, just 'then passed into Act). With the recent Punjab atrocities in his mind, C. R. Das was for total rejection of the Reforms while Gandhiji advocated moderation and active co-operation with the Government. In the next year's (1920, September) Special Congress session held at Calcutta with Lala Lajpat Rai as President, their respective roles were reversed. In this session, Gandhiji wanted the Congress to adopt his Non-Co-operation programme which he had already inaugurated under the auspices of the Khilafat movement, but C. R. Das strenuously opposed Gandhiji's proposal.

In spite of strenuous opposition on the part of Mrs. Besant, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, C. R. Das and others, Gandhiji's resolution was passed by a large majority. Then came the regular session of the Congress at Nagpur in December, 1920. Here the triumph of Gandhiji was complete as C. R. Das also surrendered to him. Only the Great Sentinel Mahammad Ali Jinnah dared raise his voice against the surrender of the Congress to Gandhiji.

In April, 1921, Lord Chelmsford's term of Viceroyalty came to an end and he was succeeded by Lord Reading, then the Lord Chief Justice of England. Lord Reading had advised the British Government that a visit by Prince of Wales would evoke an emotion of loyalty to the Crown and assuage the feeling of resentment in India. The British Government accepted the advice of Lord Reading and it was announced that the Prince of Wales would visit India next cold weather. As soon as the announcement was made, the Congress Working Committee, under Gandhiji's advice, issued instructions for boycott of the Prince's visit. On the 17th November, 1921, the Prince of Wales landed at Bombay. The Congress had declared Hartal on that day. When an attempt was made to enforce the Hartal, clashes occurred between the Non-co-operators and the Co-operators at Bombay, which degenerated into fierce rioting in which hooligans of the city took a large part necessitating firing by the Military. Murder and arson were the order of the day. All these happened before the very eyes of Lord Reading who had come to Bombay to receive the Prince.

The Prince of Wales was to visit Calcutta during the Christmas. Lord Reading was anxious that the Prince's Calcutta visit should be a success, and therefore, he was ready for a settlement with the Congress. A peace-maker was found in the person of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, the veteran Nationalist leader, who had kept himself away from the Gandhian movement. At this time C. R. Das, Maulana Azad and other Bengal leaders were in jail in Calcutta. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya came to the jail to see them. As a result of discussion

between Pandit Malviya, C. R. Das and Maulana Azad, a telegram under the joint signature of C. R. Das and Maulana Azad was sent to Gandhiji recommending acceptance of the proposed terms of settlement. What happened thereafter will be clear from the following extracts from Mr. Jayakar's autobiography: (at pp. 504-505):

"An important incident which happened at the Ahmedabad Congress was that, owing to the efforts of Sapru, who at this time was the Member of Lord Reading's Government, and also owing to the active efforts of Malviyaji, an offer was received at Ahmedabad through Hridayanath Kunjru and Jamnadas Dwarakadas. They were sent at the instance of the Viceroy, Sapru and Mrs. Besant to Gandhiji at Ahmedabad on 18 December, 1921, with the offer that, if the agitation boycotting the visit of the Prince was stopped, the Viceroy would call a Round Table Conference in Calcutta a week prior to the Princes' visit there, at which, he himself would represent the British Government and India would be represented by its political leaders, including Gandhi and his Congress friends. The Viceroy further promised that at this conference he would, on behalf of the "British Government, offer full Provincial autonomy and discussions would take place as to what powers could be transferred in the Central Government to the Indian People's representatives. In other words, in addition to the full Provincial Autonomy, dyarchy in the Central Government would be negotiated.

When this message was conveyed to Gandhiji at Ahmedabad, both Jinnah and myself were sitting very near him. Over this offer Gandhi remained silent in deep thought but some of his inflated supporters came out with the comment that the Viceroy must come to Ahmedabad personally to make this offer and to deal with Gandhi, instead of sending it through emissaries not accredited to the Congress. Jinnah and myself exchanged glances at such a reception of the Viceroy's offer but

Gandhi remained silent. We pressed him to explore this offer for, we thought, that in it may be germs which might be utilised for further development and the opportunity should not be ignored as it was obviously due to the Viceroy's anxiety to stop the boycott of the Prince of Wales' visit when the Prince was in Calcutta during the Christmas festival. Gandhi listened with great attention but we felt doubtful whether he too shared the complacent views of some of his followers, who had come to convince themselves that the Government had been defeated and Swaraj was already in their hands. Gandhi, however, agreed to convey through the emissaries his acceptance of the offer, obviously with a view to exploring it. He was later engaged in deep consultations with his followers and Maulavis, at which we were not present, but it was clear that these followers did not like the idea of Gandhi accepting the Viceroy's offer and going to the Round Table Conference..."

The net result of Gandhiji's deep consultations with his immediate followers and the Maulavis was as Maulana Azad writes in his autobiography:

"To our (C.R. Das and Maulana Azad) surprise and regret, Gandhiji did not accept our suggestion. He insisted that all the political leaders, particularly the Ali Brothers, must first be released unconditionally. He declared that we could consider the proposal for a Round Table only after they had been released. Both Mr. Das and I felt that this demand was a mistake. When the Government had agreed that the Congress leaders would be released before the Round Table Conference, there was no point in such special insistence... Since no settlement was made, the boycott was a great success but we had missed a golden opportunity for a political settlement. Mr. Das made no secret of his disapproval and disappointment."

C. R. Das gave vent to his feelings in a speech made at Madras in June, 1923 (Jayakar's Story of My Life, p. 509 Vol. 3):

"I myself led people to prison. ... I sent my son first to jail. My son was followed by my wife, and then I went to prison... I knew that the spirit of resistance that manifested itself was mighty and the proudest Government did bend to it. You (Gandhi) bungled it, and mismanaged it. Now you turn round and ask the people to spin and do the work of Charka alone..." (See also History of the Congress by Pattabhi Sitaramayya, p. 281, Vol. I.)

In spite of what happened at the Nagpur Congress of December, 1920, C. R. Das was never enamoured of wholesale and indiscriminate non-co-operation. In his opinion, boycott of legislature, district boards, municipalities and other public bodies had proved to be a failure and therefore, a change of policy had become necessary. Pandit Motilal Nehru also agreed with him. Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyenger who had also joined the Congress after retiring from the Advocate-Generalship of Madras was also of the same view. These three sponsored a resolution at the next session of the Congress (1922) held at Gaya that representatives of the Congress be allowed to contest the Council elections. At this time Gandhiji was in jail. This session was, however, predominated by a new-comer from the South, Chakravarti Rajagopalachariar of Salem, who proved to be the new apostle of Gandhism. He appealed to the emotional side of the audience that, in the absence of Gandhiji in jail, Gandhian philosophy should not be allowed to be adulterated. Voting resulted in a big majority for Rajaji. Thus, the position of C. R. Das became very anomalous. He was the President of the Congress and his policy was rejected by the Congress. Forthwith he resigned from the Congress and formed a new Party, with the collaboration of Pandit Motilal Nehru and S. Srinivasa Iyengar. Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Rajaji did not join them. This latter group were absolute Gandhi-ites and were known as No-Changers. The new Party,

the Swarajya Party, decided that Pandit Motilal Nehru should lead them in the Centre and C. R. Das should lead them in the Bengal Legislature.

After assuming the leadership of the Swarajya Party in Bengal, C. R. Das devoted himself in removing the grievances of Mussalmans of Bengal and in bringing them within the fold of the Swarajya Party. The position of the Mussalmans in Bengal was that though they were in a majority, owing to their backwardness in education, they held only 30 per cent of the posts under the Government. C. R. Das was a great realist and he realised that till the Mussalmans were given the necessary assurances for their economic future, they could not be expected to join the Congress whole-heartedly. Therefore he announced that when the Congress secured the reins of power in Bengal, it would reserve 60 per cent of all new appointments for the Mussalmans till such time as they achieved proper representation according to population. C. R. Das placed his scheme of settlement of communal question in Bengal before the Coconada Congress Session (1923). But the Congress rejected his scheme on the ground that it conceded too much to the Moslems.

Nevertheless, the attitude of C. R. Das created great confidence in the minds of the Mussalmans of Bengal and they followed his lead. In the Municipal Corporation election of March, 1924, in Calcutta, Hindus and Mahomedans fought together side by side on behalf of the Swaraj Party, though the elections were held on the basis of separate electorate. At the first meeting of the Corporation, C. R. Das was elected Mayor and Shaheed Suhrawardy the Deputy Mayor. Later on, Subhas Chandra Bose was appointed its Chief Executive Officer. Not only in the Calcutta Corporation but in the Bengal Legislative Council also, a large number of Mussalmans followed the lead of C. R. Das.

He was, however, not destined to finish his task as he died within a year, in June, 1925.

Subhas Chandra Bose who was very closely and intimately associated with Deshbandhu C. R. Das wrote as follows about him :

“The death of Deshabandhu on June 16th, 1925, was for India a national calamity of the first magnitude. Though his active political career consisted of barely five years, his rise had been phenomenal. With the reckless abandon of a Vaishnava devotee, he had plunged into the political movement with heart and soul and he had given, not only himself but his all in the fight for Swaraj. When he died, whatever worldly possessions he still had were left to the nation. By the Government he was both feared and admired. They feared his strength, but admired his character. They knew that he was a man of his word. They also knew that though he was a hard fighter, he was nonetheless a clean fighter and further he was also the man with whom they could bargain for a settlement. He was clear-headed, his political instinct was sound and unerring and unlike Mahatma he was fully conscious of the role he was to play in Indian politics. He knew, more than anyone else, that situations favourable for wresting political power from the enemy do not come often and when they do come, they do not last long. While the crisis lasts, a bargain has got to be struck. He knew also that to sponsor a settlement, when public enthusiasm is at its height, needs much courage and may involve a certain amount of unpopularity. But he was nothing, if not fearless. He was conscious of his exact role, namely, that of a practical politician, and he was therefore never afraid of courting unpopularity.” (The Indian Struggle by Subhas Bose, p. 158).

“... To-day, as we look back on the year 1925, we cannot help feeling that if providence had spared the Deshbandhu for a few years more, the history of India would probably have taken a different turn. In the affairs

of nations, it often happens that the appearance or disappearance of a single personality often means a new chapter in history. Thus has been the influence of Lenin in Russia, of Mussolini in Italy and of Hitler in Germany in recent world-history." (Do., p. 160).

Subhas Chandra Bose in his book "The Indian Struggle" has differentiated the political characters of Mahatma Gandhi and Deshabandhu, C. R. Das in the following words:

"In contrast with the Deshabandhu, the role of the Mahatma has not been a clear one. In many ways he is altogether an idealist and a visionary. In other respects, he is an astute politician. At times he is as obstinate as a fanatic; on other occasions he is liable to surrender like a child. The instinct or the judgment, so necessary for political bargaining is lacking in him. When there is a real opportunity for a bargain, as in 1921, (here the attempts of C. R. Das, Maulana Azad, Pandit Malaviya and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to arrive at a settlement with Lord Reading on the eve of Prince of Wales' Calcutta visit during Christmas week of 1921 is referred) he is liable to stick out for small things and thereby upset all chances of a settlement. Whenever he does go in for a bargain, as we shall see in 1931, he gives more than he takes. On the whole, he is no match in diplomacy for an astute British politician." (Do. pp. 158-59).

Last Testament of C. R. Das

Here are some extracts from the last message delivered by C. R. Das at Faridpore a few weeks before his death in 1925 (taken from the Presidential Speech at the Bengal Provincial Conference):

“I believe that India has a great part to play in the history of the world. She has a message to deliver in the Council Chamber of Commonwealth of Nations. To the British community I say: You have come with traditions of freedom, and you cannot refuse to co-operate with us in our national struggle, provided we recognise your right to be heard in the final settlement.

“For myself, I have a clear vision of what I seek. I seek a federation of the States in India—each free to follow, as it must follow the culture and tradition of its own people; each bound to each in the common service of all; a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among peoples of the earth.

“Then comes the question as to whether this ideal is to be realised within the Empire or outside it; Indeed the Empire idea gives us a vivid sense of many advantages: It is realised that under modern conditions no nation can live in isolation, and the Dominion Status while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secure to each the right to realise itself, develop and fulfil itself, and therefore it expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.

“To me, the idea is specially attractive, because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world-peace,

in the ultimate federation of the world. I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilisation, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led by wise statesmen at the helm is bound to make lasting contributions to the great problem—the problem of knitting the world into the greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race. I think it is good for India, for the good of the world, that India should strive for freedom within the Commonwealth and so serve the cause of humanity.”

CHAPTER XVI

Activities of Jinnah after he Seceded from the Congress (1920-1928)

Though Jinnah boldly opposed the Non-Co-operation programme of Gandhiji, he did not fall into the trap of the Government when it tried to rally those who were opposed to Non-Co-operation. He issued a statement to the Press warning the Government—(Jinnah by M.H.S. p. 279).

“The Non-Co-operation movement is only a symptom and expression of general dissatisfaction, owing to the utter disregard of public opinion and of outstanding grievances...” In January, 1922, Jinnah convened an All-Parties Conference in Bombay with himself, Mr. Jayakar and Mr. Natarajan as Secretaries and with Sir M. Visweswaryya as Chairman to urge moderation both upon the Government and the Congress. But nothing came out of it.

In 1923, he entered the Central Legislature as an independent member. At the initial stage of election, Swarajists (that section of the Congress which decided for Council-entry) set up their own candidate in opposition to Jinnah. Decrying this move the *Bombay Chronicle* wrote:

“If Mr. Jinnah is not to-day a Congress-man, he has not like many others, either betrayed the cause of his country or exploited his disagreement with the Congress for the purpose of his personal aggrandisement. He remains therefore as true a servant of the country as any Congressman and it would be a lasting shame if a leader like him were to be deprived of the opportunity of serving his country by carrying on a fight in an atmosphere admirably suited to his temperament and training, merely on petty party considerations...”

Ultimately good sense prevailed amongst the Swarajists and their candidate was withdrawn from the contest and Jinnah entered the Central Legislature unopposed.

In 1924, Jinnah was elected to be the President of the Muslim League session to be held in Lahore. On the eve of the session he gave an interview to the Associated Press of India and stated the policy he would follow. His statement ran as follows: (Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 305).

“The object of holding the session is to concentrate the united Muslim opinion with regard to—

- (1) the question of the amendment of the constitution of India;
- (2) to bring about a friendly understanding in the Punjab in particular, where owing to certain causes, which seem insignificant, a great deal of misunderstanding has been created between Hindus and Mahomedans; and
- (3) to bring about, in due course, through and by means of the All-India Muslim League organisation once more a complete settlement between the Hindus and Muslims *as was done in 1916*.

“The League is not in any way going to adopt a policy or programme which will, in the least degree as far as I can judge, be antagonistic to the Indian National Congress..... On the contrary, I believe it will proceed on lines which are best calculated to further general national interests, not forgetting the particular interests of the Muslim community.”

In his Presidential speech he emphasised that “one essential requisite condition to achieve Swaraj (mark the use of the word ‘Swaraj’ by Mr. Jinnah—the use of the word indicates his inner desire to placate the Hindus) is the political unity between Hindus and Muslims. ... I am almost inclined to say that India will get Dominion Responsible Government, the day the Hindus and Muslims are united.” (Jinnah by M. H.S., pp. 309-10). He further declared that the main task before the League was to see that an atmosphere of fraternity is created in the country between various elements in order that a joint scheme of constitution is once again formulated as it was done in 1916 at Lucknow.

The above course of action of Jinnah would show that he was in a conciliatory mood and was anxious for a complete settlement between Hindus and Muslims as was done in 1916. But, unfortunately, Mr. Mahammad Ali did a very imprudent thing. He issued a statement to the Press in which he ridiculed the League and its new Leader. Jinnah was deeply hurt but did not lose his balance. In reply, he issued an appeal to the Hindus to consider his proposal on its merits. He concluded his appeal in the following words:

“In conclusion, I would appeal to my Hindu friends not to be carried away by the antics of Mr. Mahammad Ali... I am not, as is well-known, one of those who are enamoured of separate electorates and separate representation. But the Muslim opinion is so strong on this question that we might take it as a settled fact for the time being. On that basis the Muslims should have an adequate and effective representation, wherever they are in minority. The percentage, the ratio on the population can only be fixed by mutual good-will and consent, in order to secure the success of any scheme that may come in force for representation to the Municipalities and the Legislatures. I, therefore, hope that the Hindus will not misunderstand me, as I still stand as a tried nationalist and if the Muslims ought to be organised it is not with a view to prejudicing national advance, or national interest, but on the contrary, to bring them into line with the rest of India.” (Jinnah by M. H. S., p 312).

In the meanwhile he kept himself busy in his work as a member of the Central Legislature where he gave special attention to the Indianisation of the Army. He also accepted a seat in the Muddiman Committee which was set up with a few select official and non-official members of the legislature with Sir Alexander Muddiman as President to consider the improvements that may be effected in the constitution. He worked in the Committee in unison with its Hindu Members, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Sivaswamy Iyer and Dr. R. P. Paranjpye and along with them wrote a minority report.

Nehru Report—The All Parties National Convention

In April, 1926, Lord Irwin succeeded Lord Reading as the Viceroy of India. In November, 1927, the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission, commonly known as Simon Commission, after the name of its President, was announced. Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, while speaking in the House of Lords challenged the Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution for India. The Indian leaders took up the challenge of Lord Birkenhead to produce an agreed constitution. Towards the end of December, 1927, the annual session of the Congress was held at Madras and was presided over by Dr. M. A. Ansari, the Nationalist Moslem leader of Delhi. This Congress passed a resolution convening an All-Parties Conference with a view to drawing up a constitution for India acceptable to all Parties. The Conference which was held on 19th May, 1928 at Bombay appointed a small Committee with Pandit Motilal Nehru as Chairman, to determine the principles of the new Constitution for India and draft a report thereon. The Committee produced a unanimous report which was signed by Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir Ali Imam, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Shuaib Qureshi and Subhas Chandra Bose among others. This Report came to be known as the Nehru Report. For the purpose of eliciting public opinion on the Report an All-Parties National Convention was convened at Calcutta on the 22nd December, 1928. It was also arranged that both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League should hold their respective annual sessions at Calcutta to facilitate mutual discussion.

Jinnah was not a party to the Nehru Report as he was in Europe at the time but he returned in time to take part in the deliberations of the Convention. He believed passionately in the constitutional progress of the country on the bed-rock of Hindu-Muslim unity based on political and economic justice to both communities. He did not believe in Gandhian short-cuts by way of Non-co-operation or Khilafat. In the Nagpur session of the Congress in December, 1920, protesting against the

Gandhian tactics and Gandhian programme, he declared—"Mine is the right way—the constitutional way is the right way." When the All-British Simon Commission was constituted in 1927 by Lord Birkenhead, the then Secretary of State for India, there was a split in the Muslim League. One faction led by Sir Mahammad Shafi who enjoyed the support of the Government wanted to co-operate with the Commission. The other section led by Jinnah wanted to co-operate with the Congress in their boycott of the Commission. The faction led by Sir Mahammad Shafi held their Muslim League session at Lahore while the Jinnah section of the League held its meeting at the same time, December, 1927, in Calcutta. In the Calcutta session, Jinnah prevailed upon the League to pass a resolution to the effect that the Muslim League Council should appoint a sub-Committee to confer with the Working Committee of the Congress with a view to drafting a constitution for India. *The League Council, under the inspiration of Jinnah, also indicated the conditions under which they were prepared to abandon separate electorate.* These conditions were as follows:—

1. The formation of a separate province of Sind.
2. Introduction of reforms in the N.W.F.P. and in Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces.
3. Unless and until the above proposals were implemented, the Muslims would never surrender the right of their representation through separate electorates. Muslims would be willing to abandon separate electorates in favour of joint electorates with the reservation of seats fixed in proportion to the population of different communities, if the above two proposals were implemented to the full satisfaction of Muslims and also if the following proposals were accepted:
4. Hindu minorities in Sind, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. would be accorded the same concessions in the form of reservations of seats over and above the proportion of their population as Muslims would get in Hindu majority provinces.

Jinnah's action in making common cause with the Congress in its boycott of the Simon Commission very much angered Lord Birkenhead who advised both Lord Reading and Sir John Simon to adopt tactics which would 'leave Jinnah high and dry.'

In the All-India National Convention, three chief speakers were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. M. R. Jayakar and Mr. Jinnah representing three different points of view.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru:

"If you examine the figure you will find that, including nominated members, Muslim representation in the Central Legislature is 27 per cent and Mr. Jinnah wants 33 per cent...it seems to me that you are faced with an occasion when the first and last question should be to bring about unity. Even at the sacrifice of the reputation for being logical I would rather lose my reputation than imperil the success of this conference... If he (Jinnah) is a spoilt child, a naughty child, I am prepared to say, give him what he wants and be finished with it. I am going to ask him to be reasonable but we must, as practical statesmen, try to solve the problem..."

Mr. M. R. Jayakar:

"... One important fact to remember in this connection is that well-known Muslims like the esteemed patriots Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Ansari, Sir Ali Imam, Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad and Dr. Kitchlew have given their full assent to the compromise embodied in the Nehru Committee Report. It is further to be borne in mind that even in the Muslim League a large body of members have given their assent to the Nehru Committee Report. Mr. Jinnah therefore represents if I may say so without offence a small minority of Muslims...."

Mr. Jayakar further proceeded to say that he had great difficulty in restraining his Mahasabha friends of Bombay from openly rebelling against the Nehru Report and if these clauses were amended, as was proposed by Jinnah, it would be impos-

sible for him to persuade his friends to refrain from once more urging their violent and arrogant claims.

Jinnah's reply:

"... What we want is that Hindus and Muslims should march together until our object is attained. Therefore, it is essential that you must get not only the Muslim League but the Mussalmans of India and here I am not speaking as a Mussalman but as an Indian. And it is my desire to see that we get seven crores of Mussalmans to march along with us in the struggle for freedom... I want you, therefore, to rise to that statesmanship which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru describes. Minorities cannot give anything to the majority. It is, therefore, no use asking me not to press for what you call 'these small points.' I am not asking for these modifications because I am a naughty child. If they are small points, why not concede?..."

Jinnah then drew the attention of the Convention to the constitutional developments of Canada and Egypt. The minorities, he said, were always afraid of the majorities. The majorities, particularly the religious majorities, were apt to be tyrannical and oppressive. The minorities, therefore, had a right to be absolutely secure. He further proceeded as follows:

"These are big questions and they can be settled by the exercise of the highest order of statesmanship and political wisdom. I, therefore, ask you once more to consider this question most carefully before you decide. Please do not think that in anything that I have said I am threatening any party and I hope that I shall not be misunderstood: If you do not settle this question today, we shall have to settle it tomorrow, but in the meantime our national interests are bound to suffer. We are all sons of this land. We have to live together, we have to work together and whatever our differences may be, let us not, at any rate, create more bad blood. If we cannot agree, let us at any rate agree to differ, but let us part as friends. Believe me that there is no progress for India until the Mussalmans and the Hindus are united, and let no logic, philosophy or squabble

stand in the way of coming to a compromise and nothing will make me more happy than to see a Hindu-Muslim union."

(Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, pp. 434-35).

This was a speech worthy of the Ambassador of the Hindu-Muslim unity. It was a superb effort on his part and he put his whole heart into it. But the speech was not well-received by the Hindu and the Sikh sections of the audience. Following the line of argument of Mr. Jinnah, the Sikhs also made extreme demands, while the Hindu Mahasabha delegates refused to make any further concessions beyond what had already been conceded in the Nehru report. He was also not well-treated by a section of the Congress side of the audience who shouted that Jinnah represented only a section of the Mussalmans who were communally-minded, and that undue importance should not be given to him. Jinnah returned from the meeting of the Convention with a deep wound in his heart. The net result was that the Convention achieved nothing.

In March 1929, the Nehru Report came up for a discussion at a meeting of the Muslim League held in Delhi. The meeting showed tremendous difference of opinion. In those circumstances, in order to accommodate different schools of thought among the Moslems, Mr. Jinnah moved a resolution containing his famous "Fourteen Points" which were as follows:

(Jinnah by M. H. S., p. 440):

- (1) The form of future constitution should be federal with the residuary powers vested in the provinces;
- (2) A uniform measure of autonomy shall be granted to all provinces;
- (3) All legislatures in the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality;
- (4) In Central Legislature, Mussalman representation shall not be less than one-third;
- (5) Representation of the communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorates as at

present: provided it shall be open to any community, at any time, to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorate ;

- (6) Any territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary shall not, in any way, affect the Moslem majority in the Punjab, Bengal and N.W.F. Provinces;
- (7) Full religious liberty, i.e., liberty of belief, worship and observance, propaganda, association and education, shall be guaranteed to all communities;
- (8) No bill or resolution or any part thereof shall be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose such a bill, resolution or part thereof on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community, or, in the alternative, such other method is devised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases:
- (9) Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency;
- (10) Reforms should be introduced in the N.W.F. Province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces;
- (11) Provisions should be made in the constitution giving Moslems an adequate share along with other Indians in all the services of the State and in the local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency;
- (12) The constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Moslem culture and for the protection and promotion of Moslem education, language, personal laws and Muslim charitable institutions and for their due share in the grants-in-aid given by the State and by self-governing bodies;

- (13) No Cabinet, either Central or Provincial, should be formed without there being a proportion of at least one-third Muslim Ministers;
- (14) No change shall be made in the constitution by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of the States constituting the Federation.

It is easy to be wise after the event. The History of India would, perhaps, have been different if at the time of formation and deliberation of the Nehru Committee, Jinnah had not gone to Europe. Had he been in India at the time, he would have certainly taken part in its deliberations and the Report would have borne marks of his powerful mind. After all, the difference between the Nehru Report and Jinnah's demand was not great. Even his "Fourteen Points" were not particularly aggressive demands, though at the time they appeared to be somewhat irritating. The Congress leaders thought disastrously, as later events have shown, that the demand came from people 'more famous than representative' and could be ignored with impunity. In the light of what happened afterwards, we can now say that the course of history would have perhaps changed if the Congress had accepted the advice given by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru at the sitting of the All-Parties Convention. On the subject of the failure of the Convention, a foreign critic has observed as follows:

"Here was an opportunity for the Congress to negotiate with Jinnah and arrive at an amicable and firm settlement with the Muslim League that Jinnah represented. If the Congress had followed such a course, they could have isolated the conservative factions in the Muslim League like those led by Mahammad Shafi and supported by the British. But the Nehru Report produced precisely the opposite result. It drove the two factions in the Muslim League to unite (Pakistan by Khalid Bin Sayeed, p. 68).

Similar was the comment by Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman who was himself a delegate to the Convention in his book 'Pathway to Pakistan' at p. 98:

'The short-sightedness of the Hindu politicians on this occasion could not be surpassed. The Muslims had offered to deprive themselves of the most valuable right of separate electorates in favour of joint electorates, which far-sighted statesmanship would have tried to secure at any cost, but events were leading up to something else which fate had ordained. It is true that the Muslim opinion was divided but Congress by one stroke of genius could have brought cohesion among them and used the entire mass of Muslim opinion in their struggle for independence.'

CHAPTER XVII

Re-entry of Gandhiji into Active Politics—Gandhiji Breaks Subhas-Jawahar Alliance—Gandhiji makes Jawaharlal President of the Lahore Congress—1929

Gandhiji was arrested on March 10, 1922, on a charge of sedition, and a week later sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of six years. But he was released from jail on the 5th January, 1924, after he had undergone a serious operation for appendicitis in the jail hospital. Thereafter, he went for a change to Juhu, a sea-side resort near Bombay for recuperation. C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal went there to see him. They found that, as before, he was bitterly opposed to the Swarajist policy of Council entry and was not prepared to co-operate with them. Neither was he inclined to oppose them. They, however, came to a mutual understanding that C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru would be in charge of political campaign while he himself would confine his activities to khadi promotion. In order to promote khadi work, Gandhiji founded an autonomous body called All-India Spinners' Association absolutely independent of the Congress and Swaraj Party. For about four years thereafter he kept himself somewhat aloof from general politics except when in 1924 he presided over the Belgaun session of the Congress. In 1928, he came out of his self-imposed retirement and again took command of the Congress activities.

About the circumstances around Gandhiji's re-entry into Congress politics in 1928, Patabhi Sitaramayya, the official historian of the Congress, says as follows (p. 333, Vol. I):

"We must now tell the reader how Gandhi was drawn to Calcutta from his comparative retirement... This year when the Calcutta session was about to meet in December, 1928, Pandit Motilal (the President-elect) found himself in the midst of a somewhat intricate situation..."

Pandit Motilal Nehru was the President-elect of the Calcutta Session of the Congress in 1928. But a group of

younger people was, however, gradually making headway under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose with whose political views and political activities Gandhiji was never in sympathy. When after the death of Deshabandhu C. R. Das the question arose as to who should be his successor in the Congress Party in Bengal, Gandhiji preferred J. M. Sen Gupta to Subhas Chandra Bose and through the influence and support of Gandhiji J. M. Sen Gupta was made the Leader of the Swaraj Party, the Mayor of Calcutta Corporation and the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. The 'Triple Crown' that C. R. Das himself had been wearing was placed on the head of J. M. Sen Gupta by Gandhiji.

Subhas Chandra Bose was, however, not a person to keep quiet. He began to organise a Left Wing within the Congress. The main agenda before the Calcutta Session of the Congress was ratification of the Nehru Report (so called after the name of Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Chairman of the All-Parties Conference held in Lucknow which sat for the purpose of drafting an agreed constitution for India.) The Nehru Report made certain recommendations for the solution of the communal problems and for acceptance of a Dominion Form of Government. To the Left Wing led by Subhas Chandra Bose the recommendation regarding a Dominion Form of Government, coming as it did after the Madras Congress Resolution of complete independence, was quite unacceptable. The Left Wing had already been joined by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who had lately returned to India after prolonged travel in Europe. During his travels he studied some of the latest socio-economic-political developments in various countries of Europe and particularly of Soviet Russia. His personal experience of socialistic countries made him a great admirer of socialism, and particularly Russian Communism seemed to him to hold forth a message of hope to the world. The following extract is taken from his autobiography (at p. 166):

"I was returning from Europe in good physical and mental condition... I felt full of energy and vitality, and the sense of inner conflict and frustration that had oppressed me so often previously was, for the time being, absent. My outlook was wider, and nationalism by itself

seemed to me definitely a narrow and insufficient creed ...without social freedom and socialistic structure of society and the State, neither the country nor the individual could develop much... I found the vast political, economic and cultural changes going on in Europe and America a fascinating study. *Soviet Russia, despite certain unpleasant aspects, attracted me greatly, and seemed to hold forth a message of hope to the world.*" [Italics are by the author.]

The last sentence of the aforesaid passage is to be specially noticed—"Soviet Russia, despite certain unpleasant aspects, attracted me greatly, and seemed to hold forth a message of hope to the world." A man holding these views has no place in the Right Wing of the Congress which by that time had become an organisation backed and buttressed by the capitalists. In these circumstances, he was naturally attracted towards the Left Wing of the Congress and clasped the hands of Subhas Chandra Bose. The Independence of India League, organised by Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru became the rallying ground for the enthusiastic youth of the country. Enthusiasm of the youth in the Left Wing of the Congress led by Subhas-Jawahar combination was so much that there was a possibility of formation of an alternative Left Wing leadership of the Congress against the old guards. The Right Wing now turned to Gandhiji for coming out of his retirement to take up the leadership of the Congress again. There was no question that he was the most subtle and experienced politician of the old group with unrivalled mass prestige. Besides the opposition of the youth, the Right Wing faced danger from another direction, namely, Working Class Movement. From 1920 onwards, the industrial labourers were organising themselves and were emerging as a powerful class in the socio-economics of the country. They were fighting not only Imperialism but also the Indian Capitalists who were great exploiters of the Indian Labour. The Indian Labour movement made great progress in industrially advanced Bombay and in Gujarat. Girni Kamgar Union, the Union of Textile Workers of Bombay and Ahmedabad, Tata Workers' Union, various Railway Workers' Unions, Jute Workers' Union of Calcutta and various

other Trade Unions became very powerful forces on the side of the workers. Many of these Unions were led by young Nationalist Congressmen of the Left Wing. It may be mentioned here that Gandhiji was never in sympathy with socialism. His chief financial supporters were capitalists in whom he had implicit trust. He believed in Capitalism, but he held the opinion that the rich should hold their wealth as trustees for the benefit of the poor. This was perhaps his inherited idea, having been born in a Vaisya family. The impact of the Youth Movement under the leadership of Subhas-Jawaharlal combination and of the Labour Movement under the leadership of a compact and well-disciplined group with Socialistic and Communist ideas was so great in the country that the Right Wing feared that the control of the Congress would pass away from their hands. Faced with these dangers, the Right Wing turned to Gandhiji for taking up the active leadership of the Congress again. Gandhiji clearly saw that unless Leftism is nipped in the bud, it would ultimately devour the Congress. He therefore, entered the arena again during the Congress session of 1928 with a determination to check Leftism in the Congress. The Congress session of the year was held at Calcutta with Pandit Motilal Nehru as President. Gandhiji took the unusual step of moving the main resolution himself but he found himself opposed by both Subhas and Jawaharlal. The resolution which Gandhiji moved was as follows:

“Subject to the exigencies of the political situation, the Congress will adopt the Nehru Constitution (as drawn up by the Committee of All-Parties Conference presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru) in its entirety, if it is accepted by the British Parliament on or before December 31st, 1929; but in the event of non-acceptance by that date, or its earlier rejection, the Congress will organise Non-violent Non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse taxation and in such other manner as may be decided upon.”

Against Gandhiji's resolution Subhas moved and Jawaharlal seconded the following amendment:

“This Congress adheres to the decision of the Madras Congress declaring complete Independence to be the

goal of the Indian people and is of opinion that there can be no true freedom till the British connection is severed."

When the Subhas-Jawaharlal amendment was put to the vote, it was found that 973 voted in favour of the amendment and 1350 against it. There was intense canvassing in favour of Gandhiji's resolution and it was freely given out that if his resolution was defeated he would altogether retire from politics and the Congress. In any case, the voting showed to Gandhiji the immense strength that the Left Wing had gathered. He was determined to smash the Left Wing but he felt that he would have to pursue his aim in a very diplomatic manner. Gandhiji's tactics were superb. He would not like the stolid Vallabhbhai Patel or the sedate Rajendra Prasad or the subtle Rajagopalachariar, waste his political breath by denouncing socialism! 'He would rather, like well-known character in Moliere, embrace a rival in order the better to be able to strangle it.' He gave out that in the next year's Congress he himself would advocate Independence and thereby helped to reduce the gap between himself and the Left Wing leaders. His next strategy was superb and its aim was to break Subhas-Jawaharlal combination and re-capture Jawaharlal within his own fold.

Jawaharlal first met Gandhiji at the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1916 and at once became his devoted admirer. When Gandhiji started his Non-co-operation movement, Jawaharlal threw himself heart and soul into it after giving up his professional career. So great was his loyalty to Gandhiji that he did not join the Swaraj Party founded by his father Pandit Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das. He preferred to follow the lines indicated by Gandhiji. But a long trip to various parts of Europe, particularly Soviet Russia in 1927, produced a profound change in his outlook. This change of outlook made him give expression to views which were very critical of Gandhiji and his Right Wing followers. The adhesion of Jawaharlal to the Left Wing of the Congress gave it immense strength as the voting in the open session of the Congress in 1928 showed. Gandhiji now felt that it was essential that he should win over Jawaharlal to his side, if he wanted to beat down the Left Wing opposition and regain his former undisputed supremacy

over the Congress. In August, 1929, the All-India Congress Committee met to decide as to who should preside over the coming Lahore Congress. The majority of the Provincial Committees recommended Gandhiji's name as President. He not only declined the honour but himself put forward the name of Jawaharlal for the Presidentship. It must be remembered that up to this time Jawaharlal had played only a minor role in the Congress hierarchy, merely holding the post of a Secretary to the All-India Congress Committee. When Gandhiji pressed for the nomination of Jawaharlal, the Right Wing were rather annoyed because they felt that Jawaharlal was still a back-bencher in the Congress. In the opinion of the Right Wingers, the fittest person to preside over the Congress was Vallabhbhai Patel who had recently shown his mettle in the Bardoli peasants' campaign. Up to this time Vallabhbhai's reputation was confined only to Gujarat but as the victor of Bardoli campaign his right to be in the front rank of All-India politicians was recognised on all sides. In appreciation of his services Gandhiji himself confirmed the title of 'Sardar' given to him by the peasants of Bardoli. Henceforth he came to be known as Sardar Patel. His Bardoli services were so recent that the general public as well as the All-India Congress Committee felt that in case of non-availability of Gandhiji, it was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who should adorn the Presidential chair of the Lahore Congress. But Gandhiji thought otherwise and from his own strategical point of view there was no doubt that he was right because his object was to wean away Jawaharlal from the Left Wing and to break the Subhas-Jawaharlal combination. He fully succeeded in his object. How Jawaharlal's name was proposed for the Presidentship and how he felt about it is described in the following passage of his autobiography (pp. 194-195):

"Gandhiji was recommended for the Presidentship by the Provincial Committees. But he would have none of it..... and at the last moment he pressed my name forward. The A.I.C.C. was somewhat taken aback..... and a little irritated at being placed in a difficult and invidious position. For want of any other person, and in a spirit of resignation, they finally elected me.

"I have seldom felt quite so annoyed and humiliated as I did at that election. It was not that I was not sensible of the honour, for it was a great honour and I would have rejoiced if I had been elected in the ordinary way. But I did not come to it by the main entrance or even by a side entrance; I appeared suddenly by a trap-door and bewildered the audience into acceptance. They put a brave face on it and, like a necessary pill, swallowed me. My pride was hurt, and almost I felt like handing back the honour. Fortunately, I restrained myself from making an exhibition of myself, and stole away with a heavy heart.

"Probably the person who was happiest about the decision was my father..."

Let us now resume the thread of our discussion about the Simon Commission which was appointed when the Tory Government of Stanley Baldwin was in power. But the Tory Government fell in 1929 and the Labour Party came to power with Ramsay Macdonald as the Prime Minister and Wedgewood Benn as the Secretary of State for India. The new Government summoned Lord Irwin for consultation. Accordingly, Lord Irwin went to England in June, 1929, and returned in October of the same year. On his return, he made the announcement that the new British Government had decided to hold a Round Table Conference in England to consider the Simon Commission's Report and that in that Conference Indian representatives would be invited for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement between all parties concerned including the British Government. The Viceregal announcement was well-received on all sides and produced a calm atmosphere. Vithaibhai Patel, the President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, organised a meeting of the leaders of all parties at Delhi. The leaders issued a manifesto accepting the Viceregal declaration conditionally, one of the most important conditions being that the proposed Round Table Conference was to be on the basis of full Dominion Status for India. Signatories to the above manifesto were Gandhiji, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya & Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President-elect of the impending Lahore

Congress, did not at first agree to sign (influence of Subhas Bose was still upon him) but Gandhiji prevailed upon him to sign and later on he said that he had signed it under duress. The Bombay group of leaders, headed by Jinnah and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, issued a separate manifesto expressing satisfaction at the declaration.

Lord Irwin was very anxious to meet the Indian leaders and to come to an understanding with them and he was sincerely assisted in this respect by Vithalbhai Patel. Jinnah was anxious that the hand of friendship offered by Lord Irwin should not be rejected and, therefore, he, along with Vithalbhai Patel, personally went to Sabarmati to persuade Gandhiji to take a conciliatory attitude and to meet the Viceroy. An interview between the Viceroy and the leaders was arranged to take place on the 23rd December, 1929. Gandhiji, Pandit Motilal, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Vithalbhai Patel formed the delegation of the leaders. They all assembled at Delhi on the 22nd December, but as that day was the day of silence for Gandhiji, there could be no consultation among the members before the interview. At the Conference, Gandhiji demanded an assurance from the Viceroy that the Round Table Conference would proceed on the basis that India would immediately get Dominion Status. But the Viceroy said that he had no authority to bind the British Government in any way beyond the declaration that had been made. The result was that the interview came to an abrupt end. It is a pity that Gandhiji's adamant attitude closed all doors of discussions when the interview was arranged through all-party efforts. An opportunity for settlement through negotiations was thus lost. Naturally Jinnah, Sapru and Vithalbhai Patel who were instrumental in arranging the interview were very angry but they were helpless. Gandhiji's attitude on the present occasion was similar to what he had adopted when C. R. Das, Pandit Malaviya and Maulana Azad tried to hold a conference with Lord Reading on the eve of the Prince of Wales' visit to Calcutta towards the end of December, 1921.

From the Viceregal lodge, Gandhiji and Pandit Motilal went straight to Lahore to attend the Congress session over which Jawaharlal presided. A Congress resolution declared

that 'Having considered... the result of the meeting between Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru and other leaders and the Viceroy, the Congress is of opinion that nothing is to be gained in the existing circumstances by the Congress being represented at the proposed Round Table Conference.' It further declared that the entire scheme of Nehru Committee's Report had elapsed and that Complete Independence would be the aim of the Congress. Further,

"As a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for Independence....., this Congress directs the present Congress members of the Legislatures and Committees to resign their seats..... and authorises the All-India Congress Committee, whenever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes....."

The declarations made at the Lahore Congress came as a rude shock to all those who hoped and tried for a peaceful negotiation with the Labour Government of England. Jinnah characterised the Lahore resolution as political hysteria produced under Gandhian influence. He made an all-round attack on Gandhiji and said that, like Bourbons of France, Gandhiji was constitutionally incapable of learning and unlearning things and his Himalayan blunders of the past had failed to open his eyes to the realities of the situation.

Within three months of the passing of the Lahore Resolutions, Gandhiji undertook his historic Dandi March to rouse the passion of the masses and to break the Salt-laws.

CHAPTER XVIII

Dandi March and Salt Satyagraha—Death of Pandit Motilal Nehru (1930-1931)

Though Jawaharlal presided over the Lahore Congress of 1929, it was Gandhiji who dominated its proceedings. At Gandhiji's instance, the Lahore Congress authorised the All-India Congress Committee to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes etc. The Working Committee met at Sabarmati in the middle of February, 1930 and authorised Gandhiji and his followers-in-faith to start Civil Disobedience in the manner they thought best. Thereafter Gandhiji's faithful followers met at Sabarmati to discuss in what form the movement should start. Gandhiji had a brain-wave and he selected salt as the subject of his next Satyagraha. It was decided to break the Salt-laws, by manufacturing salt, and by raiding salt-depots. About his plan to break the salt-laws, the official historian of the Congress says:

"Gandhiji's plans have all along been revealed to him by his own instinct, and not evolved by the cold, calculating logic of his mind. His inner voice is his mentor and monitor, his friend, philosopher and guide (Sitaramayya, p. 371, Vol. I).

"He saw things as if by a flash and framed his conduct by impulses. To the righteous man, these two are supreme guides of life, not reason or intellect." (p. 378).

When Gandhiji thought of reviving the Civil Disobedience Movement through salt-satyagraha, grave doubts were felt by some of his thoughtful followers, including Pandit Motilal. But Gandhiji had no doubt whatsoever about the wisdom of the intended Dandi March to break the salt-laws. This is what P. Sitaramayya, the official historian of the Congress, says (p. 402, Vol. I):

"A doubt was oppressing some that time was not ripe. Gandhi's answer is perfect. 'Nothing has hap-

pened externally since Calcutta, but the internal conflict in me, which was the only barrier, has ceased. I am absolutely certain now that the campaign is overdue. I might have started this long before this.' Gandhi had not a shadow of doubt that the salt campaign would lead him to jail.' I expected a crisis to be soon reached which would lead to a proper Conference,—not Round Table Conference but a square-table one, where everybody attending it would know his bearings. The exact lineaments of that Conference I cannot at present depict, but it will be a Conference between equals, met to lay their heads together to devise ways and means for the establishment of 'an independent Constitution in India.'

Thereafter he wrote a letter to the Viceroy as 'a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister.' This letter was taken to Delhi by one of his Ashramites, a young Englishman, by the name of Reginald Reynolds, who, Gandhiji said, 'believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in Non-violence, and whom Providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose.' His letter makes very interesting reading and reveals his mind as to why he was embarking on his Civil Disobedience movement. The letter, dated 2nd March, 1930, begins as follows (p 14, Tendulkar's Mahatma, Vol. 3):

"Dear friend..... Why do I regard the British rule as a curse? It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation... It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And by the policy of disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. (This last sentence seems strange from a votary of Non-violence! ! !).....

"The conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organised violence of the British Government..... The Non-violence will be expressed through Civil Disobedience... I know that in embarking on Non-violence, I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk—conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another far more numerous, far

more ancient and no less cultured than itself. It is worth any amount of risk.

"I have deliberately used the word 'Conversion.' For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people, through non-violence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India."

In the said letter he told the Viceroy as to why he had chosen Salt as the subject-matter on which he intended to start his campaign. He said there that he had chosen to break the provisions of salt-law because he considered it the most iniquitous of all taxes *from the poor man's standpoint*.

Gandhiji began his march towards the sea-coast village of Dandi on 12th March, 1930. He had always a full sense of the value of publicity. His intended march was publicised with full fan-fare, and there gathered at Sabarmati newspaper correspondents from all parts of the world, photographers and cinema-men. With a long stick in his hand and 75 faithful followers behind him he covered 200 miles on foot in 24 days. He preached his doctrines through every village he passed. Crowds of thousands and thousands of village people gathered on the way to hear his message. He declared that he had no intention of returning to his Asram until he succeeded in getting the Salt-tax abolished. 'Either I shall return with what I want, or else my dead body will float on the Ocean'... he said. A sample of the speeches he made on the way is given below:

"The British rule in India has brought about moral, material, cultural and spiritual ruination of this great country. I regard this rule as a curse. I am out to destroy this system of government. I have sung the tune of 'God save the King' and have taught others to sing it. I was a believer of the politics of petitions, deputations and friendly negotiations. But all these have gone to the dogs. I know that these are not the ways to bring this Government round. Sedition has become my religion."

(P. Sitaramayya, Vol. I, p. 384).

He reached Dandi on 5th April, 1930. After morning prayers, he picked up a piece of salt lying on the sea-shore

thus formally breaking the Salt-law. After breaking the Salt-law, Gandhiji issued the following Press Statement:

"Now that the technical or ceremonial breach of the Salt-law has been committed, it is now open to anyone who would take the risk of prosecution under the Salt-law to manufacture salt wherever he wishes, and wherever it is convenient," (Sitaramayya, Vol. I, p. 387).

The next item in his campaign was raiding the Government salt-depots at Dharsana and Charsada. He said that the natural salt, like air and water, was the property of the public. Government had no right to create a monopoly of it. According to him, salt stored in the salt-depots belonged to people and therefore they had every right to raid and take possession of them. He then wrote the following letter to the Viceroy:

(Tendulkar's Mahatma, p. 36, Vol. 3):

"Dear friend, God willing, it is my intention to set out for Dharsana and reach there with my companions and demand possession of the salt-works... It is possible for you to prevent this raid, as it has been playfully and mischievously called, in three ways:

(1) by removing the salt-tax

(2)

(3) "

Thereafter it was impossible for the Government to ignore the activities of Gandhiji, and he was arrested on the 6th May, 1930.

In anticipation of his arrest, he left the following message for his countrymen (Sitaramayya, Vol. I, pp. 394-395):

"If such an auspicious beginning is carried on to its full conclusion, complete Swaraj is a certainty..... After I am arrested whole villages..... should come forward to pick up or manufacture salt. In every house, young and old should begin spinning..... There should be bon-fires of foreign cloth...

"Students should leave Government schools and Government servants should resign....."

Gandhiji's arrest was accompanied by disturbances throughout the country. There was hartal and defiance of laws everywhere; liquor-shops and foreign cloth shops were picketed and bon-fires were made of foreign clothes; Government salt-depots and salt-works were raided by volunteers and mobs. Military and Police fully retaliated and there was much loss of life. In course of these agitations and turmoils, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and others were arrested.

A very interesting story has been narrated by Mr. M. R. Jayakar in his autobiography describing Pandit Motilal Nehru's candid views about the Salt-laws. In the Indian Legislative Assembly of those days, Pandit Motilal Nehru was the leader of the Swarajya Party and Mr. M. R. Jayakar was the Deputy Leader of the Nationalist Party. A motion was tabled by a member of Motilal's party for a cut in the sale price of salt. There was a private discussion between them at Motilal's residence as to the propriety of this motion. The conversation between them is recorded by Mr. Jayakar as follows:

Motilal said, "Well, you see, my own opinion is that we should not disturb the Salt Act now, but I realise that, as a popular Party, we cannot oppose the motion, nor even remain neutral. Personally, my own opinion is that we should not tinker with the Salt Act."

I (Jayakar) said, "Your views surprise me. Supposing you were the Prime Minister, as you would be some day, I am sure, will you keep the Salt Act going?"

He (Motilal) said, "Yes, it produces about six crores of revenue, and I would not like to forego this source of income."

I (Jayakar) said, "But what about Gandhi? You know he is dead opposed to the Salt Act; he is sure to start satyagraha against your Government, for you know Gandhi is wedded to principles and is not a respecter of persons." I added—"I am sure that if your Government publicly maintained the Salt Tax, Gandhi would start satyagraha against you, with greater vigour than against a foreign Government."

Motilal laughed derisively and said, "Do you think Gandhi would organise such agitation against my Government?"

I said, "Yes."

Motilal said—"Well, all I can say is that in that case my Government would take Gandhi to a place where this Government dare not take him."

We both laughed, and I returned to my party meeting and decided to join Motilal in supporting the cut.

Jayakar says—"When Gandhi began his march to Dandi in the early part of 1930, Motilal was openly sceptical of the efficacy of the march and of the salt manufacturing activity." But Pandit Motilal was too loyal to Gandhiji and was at the same time a disciplined politician. In spite of his personal opinion to the contrary, he joined the Civil Disobedience battle, like a true soldier, the moment the Dandi March began. When his turn came, he courted imprisonment without any demur. Hardships of jail life had disastrous effect on his health and he was released, on considerations of health, before the expiry of the term of his sentence. He died on the 7th February, 1931, within a fortnight of his release from jail.

When Gandhi entered the Congress in 1919-20, Motilal was the first man to come under his banner; when in the Calcutta Congress of 1920, Gandhi asked the Congress to participate in his Non-Co-operation Movement, it was Pandit Motilal who threw his full weight on the side of Gandhiji and it was through Motilal's influence that Gandhiji's motion was carried with a majority vote. Motilal showed the way and gradually other leaders surrendered to Gandhiji's leadership. Gandhiji's debt to Motilal was incalculable. But for his help at the initial stage Gandhiji could never have risen to his full height. His final gift to Gandhiji was his own life.

We must now pay our respectful tribute to the great Pandit Motilal. In his youth, he was pre-occupied with his profession, taking little interest in politics. When he was first drawn into the vortex of Indian politics, he took his place with the Moderates. But his participation in the Jalianwalabagh enquiry gave him the shock of his life. He saw with his own eyes the brutalities and humiliations that were inflicted on the entire people by the British officials, civil and military. His chief con-

cern was now how to get rid of foreign domination. He was no longer concerned with wealth or success in the profession. From now on he was a dedicated man. He not only surrendered himself but his whole family, his beloved son, his home and all his wealth for the cause of the nation. India is indeed fortunate that, during her struggle for freedom such a noble son served her cause.

CHAPTER XIX

Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931)

In the summer of 1930, Mr. George Slocombe, correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, London, came upon the scene and attempted to bring about a compromise between Gandhiji and the Government. On May, 20, 1930, he interviewed Gandhiji at the Yervada Jail. Then he sent the following despatch to his London Paper:

"Even at this crucial hour, a settlement is possible and Mr. Gandhi is prepared to recommend to the Congress a suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement and co-operation with the Round Table Conference on the following terms:

- (1) The terms of the Round Table Conference to include the framing of a Constitution giving India the substance of independence;
- (2) Satisfaction to be granted to Mr. Gandhi's demand for the repeal of the salt-tax, the prohibition of liquor and ban on foreign cloth;
- (3) An amnesty for prisoners convicted of political offences, to coincide with the end of the Civil Disobedience campaign;
- (4)

Later on, Mr. Slocombe came in touch with other Indian leaders with a view to bring the Government and the Congress together so that the Congress might join the Round Table Conference. But nothing substantial came out of these negotiations at the time.

In accordance with the programme fixed before, the first-Round Table Conference was held in London commencing from the 12th November, 1930 under the Chairmanship of Ramsay Macdonald, the then British Prime Minister. It was attended by all the political parties of India and England, except the Congress. On its closing date, 19th January, 1931, the British

Labour Premier expressed the hope that the Congress would participate in the Second Round Table Conference. Lord Irwin was also anxious for Congress participation, and with a view to create an atmosphere of goodwill, he ordered unconditional release of all the Congress leaders including Gandhiji on 25th January, 1931.

On his release Gandhiji wrote a letter to the Viceroy asking for an interview. The first meeting between the Viceroy and Gandhiji took place on the 17th February, 1931, and there were further meetings on subsequent days. These meetings jarred on the nerves of the great British Imperialist Winston Churchill and the Imperialist blood in his vein revolted at

“the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this one-time Inner Temple Lawyer, now seditious Faqir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace, there to negotiate and to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor.”

Ultimately these talks led to what is known as Gandhi-Irwin Pact which was signed by both on the 5th March, 1931. The more important terms of the Pact were as follows:

A..... On behalf of the Congress Gandhiji agreed—

1. To suspend the Civil Disobedience movement.
2. To participate in the forthcoming Second Round Table Conference for drafting a Constitution for India on the basis of (a) Federation, (b) Responsibility and (c) Adjustments and safeguards that may be necessary in the interest of India.

B..... On behalf of the Government the Viceroy agreed—

1. To release all prisoners of non-violent activities;
2. To withdraw the Emergency Ordinances;
3. To permit people who live within certain distance of the sea-shores to collect or manufacture salt free of duty.

The most important point to note in the above Pact is that Gandhiji accepted on behalf of the Congress that the future Constitution of India should be Federal and that safeguards

for various interests were necessary. On the question of abolition of salt-tax, the Viceroy did not yield. Thus, it is clear that the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was made not on Gandhiji's terms. It is no wonder that the official circle contended that the Viceroy assisted by the able Home Secretary Sir Herbert Emerson had won the battle. The *London Times* wrote: 'such a victory has seldom been vouchsafed to any Viceroy.' Jawaharlal, in his autobiography, uttered the following words in lament (p. 258):

"Was it for this that our people had behaved so gallantly for a year? Were all our brave words and deeds to end in this?"

The Gandhi-Irwin Agreement remains one of the proverbial stories of mountain in labour producing a mouse. From the Government side, not one of the major demands of Gandhiji nor any of the Eleven Points he suggested as a palliative measure, was conceded. A few words may be said here about those Eleven points: In accordance with the Resolutions passed in the open session of the Congress at Lahore Complete Independence for India was held to be the aim of the Congress and accordingly 26th January, 1930 was fixed as the day for taking the pledge of Independence. But Gandhiji's ways were inscrutable. Even before the ink was dry on the Independence pledge, Gandhiji propounded his Eleven Points as an alternative to the struggle for Independence. Eleven things he demanded were—total prohibition; restoration of the exchange rate of rupee to 1s. 4d; protective tariff against foreign cloth; abolition of the salt-tax; abolition of the land-revenue; reduction of military expenditure; reduction of high salaries of the Civil Service; coastal traffic reservation for Indian ship-owners; abolition of C.I.D.; discharge of political prisoners and removal of restrictions for the issue of licences to use fire arms (the last demand was rather strange from a votary of non-violence). He said—"Let the Viceroy satisfy us with regard to these very simple but vital needs of India. *He will then hear no talk of Civil Disobedience.*" In a letter, dated 23rd July, 1930, to Pandit Motilal Nehru Gandhiji wrote "I know that neither you nor Jawahar were enamoured of the eleven points brought out in my first

letter to the Viceroy. My own mind is quite clear about them. *They are to me substance of Independence.*"

The Congress, at its Karachi session of March, 1931, ratified the Agreement. Jawaharlal himself was prevailed upon to move the main resolution and he did so after a 'great mental conflict and physical distress.' Subhas Bose felt very bitter at the course of events and gave vent to his feelings of bitterness particularly against Jawaharlal who replied that though he did not approve of the terms of the Agreement he nevertheless as an obedient soldier was bound to obey the leader.

The country did not take kindly to the ratification of the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement by the Congress because during the sitting of the Congress session, three terrorist patriots including Bhagat Singh were hanged in spite of universal demand of the country for their reprieve. The official historian of the Congress says (Sitaramayya, Vol. I, p. 456):

"The ghosts of these three departed young men were casting a shadow over the Assembly..."

"It is really a point of doubt, even at this distance of time, as to which resolution was the more arresting one at Karachi—that relating to Bhagat Singh or that relating to the ratification of Gandhi-Irwin agreement. The Resolution relating to Bhagat Singh was taken as the first on the agenda."

By mid-April, 1931, the term of Lord Irwin's Viceroyalty was over and Lord Willingdon succeeded him as Viceroy. With the advent of the new Viceroy, condition of things for Gandhiji deteriorated because the bureaucracy had never liked the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement and now they got a chance to assert themselves. Gandhiji was however anxious not to precipitate matters and instructed the Congressmen not to initiate any aggressive campaign (See Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Vol. I, p. 169). Nevertheless, there were many instances in which each party accused the other of the breach of Agreement. Matters reached a climax by mid-August and Gandhiji asked the Viceroy to intimate the British Prime Minister of his inability to attend the Round-Table Conference. On the 14th August the Viceroy replied that he had informed the Prime Minister of Gandhiji's decision.

Later on, Gandhiji, changed his mind and asked for an interview with the Viceroy at Simla. At the last moment some face-saving device was adopted and Gandhiji left Simla by a special train so as to catch the outgoing mail steamer at Bombay.

After the departure of Lord Irwin in mid-April, 1931, the bureaucracy threw the Gandhi-Irwin Pact overboard. They interpreted it in their own way. When the question of collection of arrears of taxes in Bardoli arose in the months of July and August, the Bombay Government took an adamant attitude. When the Congress protested, the Bombay Government replied that the Congress should not be the body at whose bidding Government revenues should be paid or withheld and that the Congress interference in the matter would not be tolerated by the Government. Gandhiji wanted to have Dr. Ansari, a Nationalist Muslim leader, as a fellow delegate to accompany him to the Round Table Conference. He expressed his desire in this respect to Lord Irwin and according to Gandhiji, Lord Irwin gave his promise. But, later on, Lord Willingdon, under pressure from the bureaucracy, refused to nominate Dr. Ansari as a delegate.

These incidents would tend to show that Gandhiji went to the Round Table Conference not as a victor as he hoped but as a suppliant for a Peace Treaty after losing the battle of Dandi March.

CHAPTER XX

Gandhiji at The Round Table Conference (1931)

We have mentioned before that the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was ratified by the Congress at its Karachi session in March 1931. The Congress not only ratified the Pact but also agreed to join in the deliberations of the Second Round Table Conference in London. It was also decided that Gandhiji alone should represent the Congress at the Conference. The decision to appoint Gandhiji as the sole representative of the Congress has been bitterly criticised by Subhas Bose in the following words in his book 'Indian Struggle':

"What was really behind that decision I have never been able to understand. Was it due to the vanity of Mahatma who wanted to appear before the world as the sole representative of the dumb millions of India? Or was it merely one more error of judgment on the part of the Working Committee? Or was there some other motive behind the decision?

..... Whatever the real explanation may be, the decision itself was a thoroughly wrong one. Alone in an Assembly of one hundred men, with all kinds of non-descripts, flunkies and self-appointed leaders arrayed against him like solid phalanx, he would be at a great disadvantage. Moreover, he would have nobody at his side to back him up in the fight that he would have with the reactionary Moslem leaders. But there was no help for it. The blind followers of the Mahatma could not be expected to criticise him and those who were not his orthodox followers had no influence on him regardless of their character, wisdom or experience."

Why Gandhiji was sent as the sole Congress delegate at the Round Table Conference has been dealt with by Pattabhi Sitaramayya in his History of the Congress, Vol. I, at p. 466:

"The last question disposed of before the Working Committee dispersed related to the resolution concern-

ing the Congress delegation to the Round Table Conference. Most of the members of the Working Committee were of opinion that the deputation should consist not of a single individual but of about 14 members. Government were quite willing to accommodate up to 20..... In the discussions that took place, the point was cleared that Gandhiji was going to London, not to hammer out the details of a Constitution but to negotiate the fundamentals of a treaty. When this point was clarified, there were no two views on the subject, and opinion was unanimous that Gandhiji alone should represent India. ... One man would represent India better than many."

Gandhiji, the sole delegate of the Congress to the Second Round Table Conference, sailed from Bombay on the 29th August in the company of Seth Ghanashyamdas Birla, the big industrialist and a great power behind the Congress. He arrived in London on the 12th September and remained in England till 5th December. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu accompanied him in their individual capacity.

In his book 'Indian Struggle' Subhas Bose writes as follows:

"While we were at Delhi, information reached us from a reliable source as to the tactics that the British Government would follow at the Round Table Conference. We were told that every effort would be made to drag Mahatma Gandhi at the very outset into minor issues with a view to getting the Indians to fight among themselves, so that they would not be able to combine against the British Government over the major issues. I duly conveyed to the Mahatma this information for what it was worth. He said in reply that his plan was to meet the authorities concerned soon after his arrival in London and try to obtain satisfaction from them on the major issues. If he felt satisfied, he would go to the minor issues—otherwise his work in England would end there and then. Unfortunately, when Mahatma Gandhi was in England..... Events took place exactly as it had been prophesied in April at Delhi."

Gandhiji was the sole Congress delegate at the Round Table Conference and he should have therefore concentrated entirely on the work of the Conference. But he did not do so. "During his stay in England he tried to play two roles in one person, the role of a political leader and that of a world-teacher..... Because of his second role, he had to spend much of his time with people who were quite useless in promoting his political mission." To show his love for the poor people, he took his residence in a poor district of East End of London which was five miles away from St. James' Palace where the Conference sat. To save unnecessary waste of time, he was asked to live in a nearby hotel and his reply was that he was not prepared to waste money by living in an expensive West End hotel. Nor would he avail himself of the hospitality of Indians and Englishmen who had houses near the place of Conference. His daily life was also such as to give an impression that he gave secondary importance to the work of the Round Table Conference. In the mornings, he walked through the slum streets around Kingsley Hall, his place of residence in East End, when women and men going to work would smile and greet him and some would join him for conversation; he visited the local people in their homes and made friends with their children. He even found time to see politicians, journalists, society ladies, social workers, literateurs and artists like Bernard Shaw and Charlie Chaplin. Later on, to suit the convenience of the interviewers, he agreed to keep an office at Knightsbridge in the heart of London. During weekends, he accepted invitations to visit Oxford, Cambridge and Lancashire Cotton Mills. On the other hand, he had no time for the various Indian members of the Conference. The Indian Liberals felt particularly aggrieved. Consequently, his contribution to the deliberations of the Round Table Conference was of very poor quality. It is a matter of deep regret that he gave more importance to his work of preaching non-violence rather than to the work of the Committee room of the Round Table Conference. In one of his popular lectures, he said—"I find that my work lies outside the Conference. This is to me the real Round Table Conference..... The seed which is being sown now may result in softening the British spirit..... and in pre-

venting the brutalization of human beings.' " But all his propaganda among Church dignitaries, professors and cranks was of no use to him for the purpose for which he was sent to England by the Congress.

Gandhiji was in prison during the First Round Table Conference but his spirit had pervaded the Conference table. The Indian Liberal leaders who were present at the Conference fully exploited and utilised his name and fame. But at the Second Round Table Conference when he appeared in person and all alone, he lost much of the glamour and the halo attached to his name. They began to think: "Is this frail man in loin-cloth so formidable that the powerful British Government should yield to him? In the reports submitted by the various Committees, the views of the so-called majority were given prominence, while Gandhiji's views were treated as a mere dissentient note. When he realised his hopeless position at the Conference, he exclaimed: "All the other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests and the Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India and all interests yet here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the parties....."

Gandhiji met his greatest failure when the question of communal representation came to be discussed in the Conference. Here he was out-manoeuvred by the wily British politicians. We may remember that Subhas Bose had warned Gandhiji before he sailed for England that he had information that the British politicians would, at the very outset of the Conference, raise the question of communal representation with a view to get the Indians to fight among themselves, so that they would not be able to combine against the British over the major issues. Bose's prophecy came to be true. Very soon after the Conference commenced its business, it was found that the representatives of the various minority communities had concluded a pact among themselves demanding heavily weighted minority representation in the proposed federal and provincial legislatures. This move was inspired by the European members of the Conference coming from India under the leadership of Sir Edward Benthall with the connivance of the Tory side of the

British delegation. Gandhiji protested and urged that the Conference had assembled mainly for the purpose of drawing up an All-India Constitution and that priority should be given to the main object of the Conference. He argued that the communal issue should be tackled later, after the basic issues had been resolved. But, no heed was paid to his protest. Ramsay Macdonald retorted that the Minorities Pact represented the considered opinion of the representatives of 115 millions of people of India and therefore the British Government was bound to give serious attention to it. He also administered a mild rebuke to Gandhiji telling him that his attitude on the communal question was hampering the progress of Constitution-making. There was complete dead-lock on this issue and the Conference ended in a fiasco on the 1st December, 1931 in an atmosphere of hatred and suspicion. Inability of the Indians to agree among themselves was proclaimed to the whole world.

A complete picture of the hopeless failure of Gandhiji is given in a confidential circular letter issued to his constituents by Sir Edward Benthall who represented the British Commercial interests in India at the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji was the sole representative of the Congress at the Round Table Conference. He did not think it worth his while to take any Congress representative but it is interesting to note that his capitalist friend Mr. G. D. Birla was there with him. The Indian capitalists were not less interested in the outcome of the Round Table Conference than the politicians. With regard to the activities of the capitalists at the Round Table Conference, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at page 241 of his autobiography says as follows:

“It became clearer to us than it had been before, how under the deceptive cover of nationalism, conflicting economic interests were at work, and how those with vested interests were trying to preserve them for the future in the name of this very nationalism. The Round Table Conference was an obvious collection of these vested interests.”

Before the first World War (1914-18), political influence of Indian capitalists was insignificant. But the immense profit

made by them in the first World War and the advent of Gandhiji on the Indian scene completely changed the position. They now wanted financial supremacy with its necessary adjunct of political supremacy. Hence we find that the *Marwari* and *Gujarati* capitalists were clustering round him and rendering liberal financial assistance to him as well as to the Congress. Indian capitalists fought their battle in the Round Table Conference behind the scene. Sir Edward Benthall's confidential letter to his constituents was as follows (p. 519, Vol. I. Sitaramayya):

"If you look at the result of the last session, you will see that Gandhi and Indian Federated Chamber are unable to point to a single concession wrung from the British Government as the result of their visit to St. James' Palace. He landed in India with empty hands.

"There was another incident too which did do him no good. He undertook to settle the communal problem and failed before all the world.

"The Muslims were a solid and enthusiastic team: Ali Imam, the Nationalist Muslim, caused no division. They played their cards with great skill throughout; they promised us support and they gave it in full measure. In return they asked us that we should not forget their economic plight in Bengal and we should 'without pampering them' do what we can to find places for them in European firms, so that they may have a chance to improve their material position and the general standing of their community.

"..... after the general elections, the right wing of the Government (British Conservatives) made up its mind to break up the Conference and to fight the Congress. The Muslims, who do not want responsibility at the centre, were delighted....

"The Muslims have become firm allies of the Europeans. They are very satisfied with their own position and are prepared to work with us."

It must be sorrowfully admitted that Sir Edward Benthall's circular letter is a damaging indictment of the part played by the Muslim delegates at the Round Table Conference.

Gandhiji's own estimate of the results of the Round Table Conference was given to his close friends on his return from London and is described as follows by Pattabhi Sitaramayya in his official history of the Congress (Vol. I, p. 510):

"These were the woes of the country narrated to Gandhiji by his friends. He himself had a tale of woe to tell his friends, which he had brought from London... He went to London and saw things for himself. The first thing he told his colleagues on return was that the actualisation of a thing was quite different from its visualisation. He knew the Moderate mentality in India but he was not prepared for the scene enacted in London. He knew the temperament of the Muslims and their reactionary bent of mind but he was not prepared for the vivisection that was practised at the Round Table Conference. He had made up his mind that the Congress should not lend its support thereafter to any kind of communalism. Its cult must be one of pure and unadulterated Nationalism. He said that India had no chance if she went on "dallying with the communal problem in the same old fashion. He wanted an assurance from his Mussalmans and Sikh friends that they would agree to any future constitution of India being fashioned, only on the basis of Indian Nationalism untainted by any communal considerations....."

The aforesaid report which Gandhiji himself made to his colleagues after his return from the Round Table Conference shows the inherent weakness of Gandhiji as a negotiator. This weakness of Gandhiji was noticed by Gokhale in his short contact with him after his return from South Africa. Gokhale said to Jayakar (Story of My Life by Jayakar, p. 317):

"There is something in him (Gandhi) which at once enchains the attention of the poor man and he establishes, with a rapidity which is his own, an affinity with

the lowly and the distressed.... But be careful that India does not trust him on occasions where delicate negotiations have to be carried on with care and caution and where restriction and tact will make for success, acting on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread."

How prophetic were Gokhale's words!

CHAPTER XXI

Gandhian Activities after Round Table Conference (1932-1936)

After the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji landed at Bombay on the 28th December, 1931. By that time the political atmosphere of India had become very tense. The Congress was in a mood of rebellion as, in its opinion, Lord Willingdón's Government paid scant respect to the terms of Gandhi-Irwin agreement and was ready to start a frontal attack on the Congress. In those circumstances, immediately after his arrival in India, Gandhiji asked for an interview with the Viceroy who replied that he was not prepared to discuss with Gandhiji the measures which the Government had taken for preservation of law and order in various provinces. Thereupon Gandhiji threatened revival of Civil Disobedience in a letter to the Viceroy which ran as follows:

"Non-violence is my absolute creed. I believe that Civil Disobedience is not only the natural right of the people, especially when they have no effective voice in their own Government, but that it is also an effective substitute for violence or armed rebellion. I can never therefore deny my creed. In pursuance thereof... the Working Committee has accepted my advice and passed resolutions tentatively sketching a plan of Civil Disobedience." (Tendulkar, pp. 153-54, Vol. 3).

Government replied that in view of the attitude of Gandhiji and the Congress, it will take all possible measures for the preservation of law and order. Forthwith they passed several Ordinances and arrested Gandhiji on the 4th January, 1932. All Congress organisations were also declared illegal. All these happened almost within a week of Gandhiji's arrival in India.

While in jail, Gandhiji began to think out new lines of action. After pondering over the matter for over two

months he decided that he would now give a fight to the Government on the issue of the proposed creation of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. On the 11th March, 1932, he wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India, that unless the British Government's proposal for the creation of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes were given up, he would undertake a fast. It is now necessary to state the circumstances under which the British Government proposed to create temporary separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. In the Second Round Table Conference, all the Minorities made common cause against the Congress and no agreement could be reached on the subject of communal representation among the parties themselves. The British Premier, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, posing as a virtuous and unwilling arbiter, said—"If you gentlemen cannot present us with a settlement acceptable to all the parties as the foundation on which to build, His Majesty's Government would be compelled to apply a provisional scheme for communal representation." The promised scheme, commonly known as the Communal Award, contemplated the creation of a certain number of seats for the Depressed Classes in the Provincial Legislatures on the basis of separate electorates, in addition to the seats they would get in the general Hindu constituencies. Thus, the Depressed Classes were given double advantages by the Communal Award. The Congress in this predicament could neither accept it nor reject it. When the Communal Award was announced on the 17th August, 1932, Gandhiji was in Yervada Jail. On learning about it, he wrote to the British Premier that as a protest against the Award he would commence 'fast' unto death from the noon of the 20th September, 1932. Ramsay Macdonald sent a very caustic reply:

"We felt it our duty to safeguard what we believed to be the right of the Depressed Classes to a fair proportion of representation in the Legislatures and we are equally careful to do nothing that would split off their community from the Hindu world.

"Under the Government scheme, the Depressed Classes will remain part of the Hindu community and

will vote with the Hindu electorate on an equal footing ... But for the first twenty years, while still remaining part of the Hindu community, they will receive through a limited number of special constituencies, means of safeguarding their rights and interests.

"You propose to adopt the extreme course of starving yourself to death not in order to secure that the Depressed Classes should have joint electorates with other Hindus, because that is already provided, but solely to prevent the Depressed Classes, who admittedly suffer from terrible disabilities today, from being able to secure a limited number of representatives of their own choosing to speak on their behalf on the legislatures..."

(Tendulkar, p. 162, Vol. 3).

Gandhiji's attitude was:

"I have to resist your decision with my life. The only way I can do it is by declaring a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind save water with or without salt and soda..."

(Tendulkar, p. 161, Vol. 3).

According to schedule, the fast commenced from the noon of 20th September in the Yervada Jail at Poona. Gandhiji's fast created great stir and the Congress leaders, Indian Liberal leaders, millionaires and capitalists assembled at the Birla House, Bombay. Now began a wrestling with Ambedkar over seats. Armed with Ambedkar's terms, Sapru, Jayakar, Rajagopalachariar, Birla and Rajendra Prasad started for Yervada. The renowned physicians of Bombay, Dr. Gilder and Dr. Patel were also there. Heart-pressure and blood-pressure of Gandhiji were relayed by cable to London and the world. Tagore came from Calcutta and sang a selection of his own songs to the Mahatma. Musicians were admitted to jail who played on musical instruments and chanted devotional songs to soothe him. In the end, the Mahatma "out-Harijaned the Harijan Ambedkar." It was agreed between them that the Depressed Classes would have 147 reserved seats in place of 71 reserved to them under the Communal Award of Ramsay Macdonald. Gandhi-Ambedkar agreement was cabled to London. Ramsay Macdonald and Sir Samuel Hoare gave their approval to it and now Mahatmaji

could break his fast and the Epic fast was broken with a great deal of pompous ceremony and a fanfare of publicity.

It may be mentioned here that at the Round Table Conference Dr. Ambedkar was not at first agreeable to enter into the Minority Pact which produced a dead-lock there. There he had approached Gandhiji to show some concessions to the Depressed Classes but he did not pay any attention to Dr. Ambedkar's request then. At the conclusion of the Poona Pact, Dr. Ambedkar said:

“My only regret is why did not Mahatmaji take this attitude at the Round Table Conference? If he had shown the same consideration for my point of view then, it would not have been necessary for him to go through this ordeal.”

(Louis Fischer's Gandhi, p. 344).

Subhas Bose's comments were as follows:

“Before entering into this Pact (Minorities Pact), Dr. Ambedkar wanted to come to an agreement with the Mahatma whereby a certain number of seats would be reserved in the Legislatures for the Depressed Classes on the basis of a common electorate for all sections of Hindus. At that time, the Mahatma would not think of any compromise. When Dr. Ambedkar joined the Minorities Pact, he was assured not only of a number of seats for the Depressed Classes but also of a separate electorate for them. There is no doubt that if a settlement had then been made with Dr. Ambedkar, the terms would have been much better than the terms of the Poona Pact concluded in September, 1932, after the historic fast of the Mahatma.”

(Indian Struggle by Subhas Bose, pp. 308-9).

The next action of Gandhiji was to undertake another fast in jail and this fast was what he called a self-purificatory fast. In Gandhiji's own words, the fast was—‘a heart's prayer for purification of myself and my associates for greater vigilance and watchfulness in connection with the Harijan cause.’ Government released him from jail on the very first day of his fast, namely, 8th May, 1933. On release from jail, he tried to

conciliate the Government by temporarily suspending the Civil Disobedience movement. But his overtures failed to evoke any response from the Government side. Then Gandhiji asked for an interview with the Viceroy 'with a view to explore the possibilities of peace' but the Viceroy refused to see him. Gandhiji then performed some Satyagraha in his own individual capacity and he was promptly jailed again. In jail, he started fasting because Government denied him facilities to carry on his Harijan work. In the midst of his fast, Government released him unconditionally on the 26th August, 1933, in consideration of his health, but at the same time made it absolutely clear to him that any attempt to revive Civil Disobedience movement will be severely dealt with.

In these circumstances, Gandhiji thought it prudent to keep himself busy solely with Harijan work and consequently political activities in the country came to a stand-still. The situation thus developed was not liked by a number of Congressmen and they came to hold the view that the Swaraj Party founded by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru should be revived and parliamentary activities should be resumed. Dr. Ansari, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai took a leading part in this direction and put pressure on Gandhiji. The Council-entry programme was then re-adopted at a meeting of the A.I.C.C. with Gandhiji's consent. Thereafter Gandhiji decided to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement, while retaining this own right of offering individual Satyagraha. His decision in his respect was announced in a statement issued on April 7, 1934 from Patna:

"..... I feel that the masses have not received the full message of Satyagraha owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission. It has become clear to me that spiritual instruments suffer in their potency when their use is taught through non-spiritual media..... Satyagraha is a purely spiritual weapon. Everyone cannot use surgical instruments.

"Now, after much searching of the heart, I have arrived at the conclusion that in the present circumstances only one, and that myself, and no other should, for the

time being, bear the responsibility of civil resistance, if it is to succeed as a means of achieving Purna Swaraj.

“What are the Civil resisters, thus freed, to do? If they are ready for the call whenever it comes, they must learn the art and the beauty of self-denial and voluntary poverty. They must engage themselves in nation-building activities, the spread of Khaddar through personal hand-spinning and hand-weaving.....”

(Tendulkar, pp. 259-60, Vol. 3).

Gandhian activities since his release from jail and the aforesaid statement of Gandhiji particularly the advice given by him that “they must learn the art and the beauty of self-denial and voluntary poverty” frightened and oppressed Jawaharlal who was in Alipore Jail at this time. He has given his lamentations in his autobiography: (pp. 506-509).

“This was the political programme that we were to follow. With a stab of pains, I felt that the chords of allegiance that had bound me to him (Gandhiji) for many years had snapped..... I realised that I held clear and definite views about many matters which were opposed to his..... But Gandhiji’s greatness or his service to India or the tremendous debt I personally owed to him were not in question. In spite of all that, he might be hopelessly in the wrong in many matters. What, after all, he was aiming at? In spite of the closest association with him for many years, I am not clear in my own mind about his objectives..... He is an extraordinary paradox.”

About this time in 1934, another idea came into Gandhiji’s head and he was furiously thinking over his position *vis-a-vis* the Congress organisation. He now contemplated retirement from the Congress. In a long statement, dated 17th September, 1934, Gandhiji referred about the differences that existed between himself and a considerable body of the Congressmen and announced his intention to resign from the Congress:

“It has appeared to me that there is a growing and vital difference of outlook between many Congressmen and myself..... Let me state them. I put the spinning

wheel and Khadi in the forefront. Hand spinning by Congress intelligentsia has all but disappeared. The general body of them have no faith in it and yet, if I could carry their reason with me, I would substitute the four-anna franchise by personal daily hand-spinning.

"Take again the Parliamentary Board..... There are sharp differences of opinion....."

"..... I have welcomed the formation of a socialist group...(But) I have fundamental difference with them... if they gain ascendancy in the Congress, as they well may, I cannot remain in the Congress....."

(Tendulkar, p. 297, Vol. 3).

After stating the differences between himself and the intelligentsia, he said that he felt that his dominating presence in the Congress prevented freedom of thought. In his opinion, such a state of affairs was not desirable for the healthy growth of the organisation and, therefore, he had decided to keep out of the Congress so that the ordinary Congressman may act without any inhibition by his presence and he himself may have complete detachment and absolute freedom of action to pursue his experiments in Satyagraha.

A few months later in December, 1934, the annual session of the Congress was held in Bombay under the Presidentship of Babu Rajendra Prasad. At this Congress *he formally announced his retirement from the Congress*. But before he retired, *he took some precautionary steps so that the Congress might not deviate from the Gandhian path*. In accordance with Gandhiji's wishes, the Congress passed the following resolution prescribing compulsory wearing of khaddar by Congressmen:

"No member shall be eligible for election to any office or any Congress Committee unless he is a habitual wearer wholly of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar."

(Tendulkar, p. 304, Vol. 3).

Another resolution was passed whereby four-anna franchise was replaced by a personal labour franchise:

"No person shall be eligible to be a candidate for election to membership of any Congress Committee, un-

less he or she has performed some manual labour continuously for six months immediately before the date of nomination for election, on behalf of or for the Congress, equal in value to 500 (five hundred) yards per month of well-spun yarn of over ten counts and in time to eight hours per month." (Do, p. 304).

Measures were also taken that the aforesaid resolutions might not be evaded. With that end in view, the following tail was attached to the aforesaid resolution:

"The form of acceptable labour alternative to spinning shall be prescribed from time to time by the Working Committee, in consultation with the Provincial Congress Committees and the All-India Village Industries Association." (Do, p. 304).

The All-India Village Industries Association mentioned above was a new organisation established at this time with J. C. Kumaramappa as its Chief Executive who was to work under Gandhiji's advice, guidance and control.

Thus revolutionary changes were effected in the Congress constitution. These resolutions converted the Congress into a pure Gandhian organisation where admission could be had only by those who had gone through the brain-washing exercises of hand-spinning. Thus after ensuring that no one but the faithful might have any entry into the Congress, the Commander of the faithful announced his so-called formal retirement from the Congress. All this was done by Gandhiji in the name of keeping the Congress as a democratic and representative organisation.

After Gandhiji had formally announced his retirement, the Congress passed a vote of confidence in him in the following words.

(Sitaramayya, Vol. I page 593):

"The Congress reiterates its confidence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi..... It places on record its deep sense of gratitude for the unique services rendered by him to the nation and notes with satisfaction his assurance that his advice and guidance will be available to the Congress whenever necessary."

As a matter of fact, the Congress fully utilised the assurance thus given and never took any major decision without consulting him. Outwardly, he kept aloof from Congress politics but he utilised his respite in creating his own cadre of soldiers—his khaddar-clad constructive workers of All-India Spinners' Association, Gandhi Seva-Sangha, Village Industries Association, Harijan Sevak Sangha, etc. These were the real nucleus of Gandhian soldiers, Gandhiji's own Battalion, to do or die at his bidding. His hold over the Congress was, however, not loosened in any way by this so-called retirement and later on, in a speech before the Gandhi Seva-Sangha, in February, 1936, he said:

“I see that there is a tendency to believe that these programmes (constructive and political) are mutually exclusive or antagonistic..... But really there was no such opposition..... There was no absolute division between the so-called political and so-called constructive programmes. In our method of work there are no water-tight compartments.”

(Tendulkar, p. 54, Vol. 4).

By these tactics at the time of his so-called retirement, he made his position in the Congress stronger. He became the dictator of the Congress which was now a '*closed Army of the Faithfuls*' only. The Congress was no longer a democratic or representative body of the people.

CHAPTER XXII

Jinnah Attempts Reconciliation with the Congress (1934—1937)

At the Round Table Conference, the leadership of the Muslim delegation was held by the Aga Khan. Jinnah did not find the atmosphere of the Conference congenial to his temperament and so did not take any active part in it. Moreover, he was not accustomed to play second fiddle to anyone. At the end of the Conference he decided to settle in London. There were many reasons for it. Perhaps, the first and foremost of the reasons was death of his wife. Political happenings in India and his wife's death made Jinnah very unhappy and he was in a despondent mood throughout the Round Table Conference and so he was more or less a silent spectator in course of its proceedings. At the end of the Conference, he purchased a house in Hampstead, a suburb of London, and began to practise before the Privy Council.

Later on, when he was disillusioned at the attitude of Gandhi and the Congress High Command, he made a speech at Aligarh in which he gave his own reasons for leaving India after the Round Table Conference. He said:

“I received the shock of my life at the meetings of the Round Table Conference. In the face of danger, the Hindu sentiment, the Hindu mind, the Hindu attitude led me to the conclusion that there was no hope of unity. I felt very pessimistic about my country. The position was most unfortunate. The Mussalmans were like dwellers in No Man's land: they were led by either the flunkies of the British Government or the camp-followers of the Congress. Whenever attempts were made to organise the Muslims, toadies and flunkies on the one hand, and the traitors in the Congress camp on the other, frustrated the efforts. I began to feel that neither could I help India, nor change the Hindu mentality; nor could I make the Mussalmans realize the precarious position.

I felt so disappointed and depressed that I decided to settle down in London. Not that I did not love India, but I felt so utterly helpless."

...(Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 591).

At the Round Table Conference, he wanted a middle course to be followed and his attempts were frustrated as much by the Moslem leaders, whom he called flunkeys and toadies, as by the Hindu leaders who, in his opinion, showed rabid communal mind. Hence, he kept aloof from the proceedings of the Round Table Conference and, at least, did not take any part in the intrigues and the machinations that went on behind the scene at St. James' Palace. He always excelled in straight fight and always avoided intrigues or equivocations.

That Jinnah was dissatisfied with the leadership of the Aga Khan was shown by the following event. In the winter of early 1935, Aga Khan came to India for a short visit and the Khoja Sect of the Mussalmans (Mr. Jinnah himself was a Khoja) arranged for a big dinner in his honour. It is to be particularly noticed that he did not join that dinner either as host or guest. People said that this was an indication to show that he did not quite like the line adopted by Aga Khan as the leader of the Muslim delegation at the Round Table Conference and that he was anxious to retain his freedom for a settlement with the Congress.

(Jinnah by M.H.S., p. 523).

Towards the end of 1934, while still in England, he was elected to the Indian Legislative Assembly from the Muslim constituency of Bombay. He came to India in January, 1935, to attend the first session of the Assembly. He took part in the debate relating to the Communal Award of Ramsay Macdonald and his speech was quite conciliatory. He said:

"..... speaking for myself personally, I am not satisfied with the Communal Award, and again, speaking as an individual, my self-respect will never be satisfied until we produce our own scheme..... But for the time being let it stand..... until a substitute is agreed upon between the communities concerned....."

(Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 518).

Jinnah's conciliatory speech in the Assembly raised the hope on all sides that there would be a settlement of communal problems by mutual agreement. At this time Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the President of the Congress and he was also anxious for a settlement. Both of them met together to pick up the threads left loose in the Assembly debate, and both of them made sincere efforts for an agreed solution but they were foiled in their attempt by the extremists on both sides. His Private Secretary and biographer, Mr. M. H. Saiyid, says that Mr. Jinnah was so anxious to arrive at a settlement with the Congress that he often absented himself from the Assembly debates so as to be free to resume his conversations with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Congress.

He was very much impressed with his talks with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and realised the difficulties the latter had with the extreme attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha. Jinnah however hoped—

“... the leaders of the Congress with their wider experience and very good training, would overcome that section and assure the Muslims that ‘it is not going to be a Hindu Government, but an Indian Government in which the Muslims will not only have a fair and just treatment but also that they will be treated as the equals of the Hindus’ .” (Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 526).

His position at this time was rather peculiar. Of course, among the intelligentsia and educated Hindus (outside the Congress); he was admired for his patriotism and political sagacity, but the extremist Hindus, particularly the Hindu Mahasabha, looked upon him with suspicion. Among the Mussalmans, a section believed that his nationalistic views were not altogether serviceable to Muslim interests. He *was not a persona grata with the British* because of his strong criticism of the new Government of India Act.

His devotion to legal and constitutional methods and his anxiety to settle all communal problems by mutual agreement is well-illustrated by the following incident. In March, 1936, great communal tension arose between the Muslims and the Sikhs for the possession of a building at Shahidganj, Lahore.

The Muslims claimed the building as an old mosque and their claim was denied by the Sikhs. The situation was going out of control. In these circumstances, Jinnah was asked to settle the dispute. He accepted the invitation and came to Lahore. He was very much vexed that in those momentous times, the Muslims and the Sikhs should fritter away their energies in communal squabbles. In a meeting of the Muslims at Lahore he spoke as follows:

“While we are not going to give up our claim for Shahidganj, we are going to make every effort for an honourable understanding with the sister community. *We shall seek all remedies, by means of constitutional and peaceful methods*, and there are many avenues and channels open to us... There is no question of defiance to or intimidation of the sister community... the Sikhs are a great community and nothing will please us more than an honourable settlement with them...”

(Jinnah by M.H.S., pp. 532-533).

On his initiative, a strong reconciliation Committee was formed consisting of Sir Md. Iqbal, Raja Narendra Nath, Sardar Buta Singh and several other prominent Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders and the dispute was amicably settled. His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab paid the following tribute to Jinnah's peace-efforts:

“I am greatly obliged to the efforts of Mr. Jinnah for this improvement and I wish to pay an unqualified tribute to the work he has done...”

A portion of the speech of the Governor throws much light on the communal relationship in Punjab at that time.—

“His Excellency re-iterated that the existence of three great communities in the Punjab made it impossible for any one community to dominate over the others. If stability is to be secured, there had to be a large measure of co-operaton, and co-operation meant closer contacts, wider sympathies and better understanding.”

(Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 535).

Throughout 1937 and 1938, Jinnah tried his level best to come into personal contact with Gandhiji for the purpose of settling Congress-League disputes. But Gandhiji and the Congress High Command did not think it worth while to cultivate Jinnah's good will. Feeling aggrieved, Jinnah issued the following statement in July, 1937:

"I assure the Mussalmans and the public at large that I am not in the slightest degree affected by anything that has happened in the past, and nobody will welcome an honourable settlement between the Hindus and Mussalmans more than I, and nobody will be so ready to help it and as earnest on my part I sent a message to Mr. Gandhi when he was at Tithal only in the month of May last appealing to him to take up the question of Hindu-Muslim settlement and concentrate his great influence and efforts to which I received the following reply on May 22, 1937:

'Dear Mr. Jinnah, Kher has given me your message. I wish I could do something but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is as bright as ever; only I see no daylight out of the impenetrable darkness and in such darkness and in such distress, I cry out to God for light. Yours sincerely, M. K. Gandhi.'"

(Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 562).

Further attempt on the part of Jinnah to have a personal discussion with Gandhiji elicited the following evasive reply:

"Dear Mr. Jinnah,..... So far as I am concerned, just as on the Hindu-Mussalman question I was guided by Dr. Ansari, now that he is no more in our midst, I have accepted Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as my guide. My suggestion, therefore, to you is that conversation should be opened at the first instance with the Maulana Sahib." (Do, p. 586).

In the November of 1937, a reception was arranged by the Mussalmans of Bombay in honour of Jinnah. In that reception Jinnah strongly criticised the Congress—But at the same time

appealed to the Congress that it should settle with the Muslims the various issues which confronted India at the moment, as it was no use fighting among themselves. "The aims of the League, he pointed out, was the same as that of the Congress. Only the Mussalmans did not feel secure under the future constitution of India and if they could be assured of this political freedom *there was really no reason why both the great organisations should not coalesce to put forth a united programme.*" (Do, pp. 584-85).

Jinnah became very bitter only when he found that his conciliatory overtures were contemptuously ignored. Until his self-respect was wounded, his speeches were never characterised by any bitterness but, on the other hand, he tried to be persuasive, as will be apparent from a speech he made in April, 1936 before the Jamiut-ul-ulema Conference at Delhi. He took pains to explain in his speech why safeguards were necessary for the minorities under the new constitution. He said:

"..... It was for the first time that a representative government was being established in India and this meant the rule of majority, and naturally the minorities had apprehensions as to what the majority would do. Majorities were likely to be tyrannical. Power and authority were likely to intoxicate people;—therefore provisions for safeguards are essential for the minorities in any scheme of a democratic constitution."

(Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 538).

How prophetic are these words in the light of present-day experience!

In the same speech he uttered the following noble words:

"The eighty millions Muslims of India are willing and even more anxious than any other community to fight for the freedom of *Mother India*, hand in hand with other communities." (Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, p. 537).

CHAPTER XXIII

Congress Repulses the Advances of Jinnah and the Muslim League (1937)

The election was fixed to be held in the early part of 1937. Both the Congress and the League formed their own separate election organisations. Jinnah said : (Jinnah by M. H. S., p. 539)

“The Hindus and Muslims must be organised separately, and once they are organised they will understand each other better and then we will not have to wait for years for an understanding.”

It must be, however, clearly understood that as yet Hindus and Muslims are not ranged against each other into two political camps like ‘Whigs’ and ‘Tories’. Muslim League was definitely a communal organisation in which none but Muslims were members, but nevertheless not all the Muslims belonged to it. Neither all Hindus belonged to the Congress ; many of them were Liberals and Independents, strongly opposed to the policy of the Mahatma and his satellites. The election speeches of Jinnah stressed the need for an understanding between the Congress and the League. They were mostly couched in moderate tones, earnestly appealing for mutual accommodation. Here are extracts from some of the speeches made by Jinnah during the election. (Pakistan by Khalid Bin Sayeed, page 83).

“Ours is not a hostile movement. Ours is a movement which carries the olive branch to every sister-community. **We** are willing to co-operate, we are willing to coalesce with any group or groups, provided their ideals, their objects are approximately the same as ours.”

.....

“The Muslim League stands for full national self-government for the people of India. Unity and honourable settlement between Hindus, Muslims and other minorities is the only pivot upon which national self-government for India of three hundred and eighty millions can be constructed and maintained.”

.....

"There is no difference between the ideals of the Muslim League and of the Congress, the idea being complete freedom for India. There could not be any self-respecting Indian who favoured foreign domination or did not desire complete freedom and self-government for his country."

When the results of the election were out, it was found that the Congress had an overwhelming victory in comparison with the Muslim League and all other parties. In seven provinces, it obtained clear majority and only in Bengal, Punjab and Sind, it was in a minority. It is interesting to note that the Muslim League could not make any headway in the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal. In the Punjab, the majority of the Muslim seats went not to the League but to the Unionist Party led by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan. In Bengal, it was not the Muslim League but the Krishak-Praja Party of Maulavi Fazlul Haque which captured the largest number of Muslim seats. Out of a total 485 Muslim seats, the League was able to secure only 108 seats. The Congress contested 58 Muslim seats, through the Nationalist Muslims and won 26. The great and spectacular victory unfortunately had an intoxicating effect on the Congress and its pride and arrogance reached the highest pitch.

After winning the elections the Congress had to consider whether it would accept office or not, because the provincial constitutions were full of reserved powers of the Governor. The All-India Congress Committee however permitted the acceptance of office if the leader of the Congress Party in the provinces got assurance from the Governor that he will not use his special powers nor will set aside the advice of the ministers given to him constitutionally. The Governors replied that they had no power to give any such assurance. Thereupon, at first, the Congress refused to accept office.

In these circumstances, the Governors asked the leader of the party which had the second largest support in the provincial legislatures to form ministries. In this way, non-Congress ministries were installed in several provinces. But very soon the Congress began to repent and was showing ever-increasing

anxiety to hold the seat of power. In view of the previous attitude shown by the Congress, some face-saving formula was very necessary for the Congress before they could accept office. Lord Linlithgow, the new Viceroy, came however to the rescue of the Congress by making a clever and carefully-worded statement which helped to soothe the elastic conscience of the Congress, though really it did not give any categorical assurance. This statement of the Viceroy was considered as sufficient by Gandhiji to enable the Congress to accept office in those provinces where they were in majority in the provincial legislatures.

When the Congress decided to accept office, the League expressed its willingness to enter into a Coalition with the Congress. We have said before that when the elections were held, the Congress and the League were not ranged against each other in opposite camps, like 'Whigs' and 'Tories'. There was nothing to prevent Coalition Ministry between the Congress and the League. But flushed with pride at its overwhelming success at the polls, the Congress lost its head and adopted imperious attitude not only to the Government but also to other parties. Contemptuously ignoring the Muslim League. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the President of the Congress at the time, declared that in the political evolution of the country, there are only two parties—the Britishers and the Congress—that counted. Cut to the quick at this contemptuous dismissal of the League, Jinnah retorted—"There is a third party..... the Muslims" whom the Congress, he warned, will ignore at its own risk and peril. He warned, cautioned and pleaded to the Congress—

"We are not going to be dictated to by anybody. We are willing to co-operate with any group of a progressive and independent character provided, its programme and policy correspond to our own. We are not going to be camp followers of any party. We are ready to work as equal partners for the welfare of India. (Jinnah by Hector Bolitho, Page 113).

Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and the Congress High Command disdained to take any notice of the offer of Jinnah 'to work as

equal partner for the welfare of India.' They altogether ignored the Muslim League.

The short-sightedness of Pandit Nehru is well-illustrated by what happened in U.P. after the elections. There the League and the Congress fought the elections hand-in-hand. Jamiat-ul-Ulema-Hind was an influential Muslim organisation. The Jamiat had supported the League as well as the Congress on the express understanding that after the elections were over, the League and the Congress would work in co-operation. Chaudhuri-Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan were then leaders of the Muslim League in U.P. They naturally expected some substantial share in the composition of the ministry as the League had returned a substantial number of members to the Assembly. But when the time came to form the U.P. Ministry, Pandit Nehru refused to give them their due share. With regard to Nehru's action in this matter, Maulana Azad says as follows in his book, "India Wins Freedom" :

"If the U.P. League's offer of co-operation had been accepted, the Muslim League Party would for all practical purposes have merged in the Congress. Jawaharlal's action gave the Muslim League in U.P. a new lease of life. All students of Indian politics know that it was from U.P. that the League was reorganised. Mr. Jinnah took full advantage of the situation and started an offensive which ultimately led to Pakistan."

The following is an extract from Beecher's biography of Nehru on the aforesaid U.P. incident :

"During the election campaign the two parties had co-operated to some extent, notably in the United Provinces, where there developed a tacit understanding that a Coalition Government would be formed. However, this was before the elections, when the Congress did not expect a clear majority. After the elections it was no longer necessary to make concessions. The League offer of co-operation was now treated with disdain."

Frank Moraes in his biography of Nehru says :

"Had the Congress handled the League more tactfully after the elections, Pakistan might never have come into being..... Jinnah certainly created Pakistan. But the Congress by its sins of omissions and commissions also helped to make it possible. Misreading the poor showing of the Muslim League at the polls..... the Congress spurned Muslim League's overture for a coalition. The result was not to drive the League into political wilderness but to strengthen Jinnah's hands as the foremost champion of Muslim claims and rights."

Sir Percival Griffiths, at one time a member of the Indian Civil Service and later on the leader of the European group in the Central Indian Legislature, in his book 'British Impact on India' says as follows :

"In 1937, the Congress leaders had the ball at their feet. There were, it is true, the three provinces of Bengal, the Punjab and Sind, in which they could not hope for authority and Assam was to remain precariously balanced between the Congress and the Muslim League. In India as a whole, however, the Congress was by far the most important political factor. Although the Muslims were uneasy at the growing strength of the Congress, they had not seriously thought of demanding Pakistan. All the Congress Party leaders had to do in order to establish their power was to be a little conciliatory in their dealings with the Muslims.....

"There can be little doubt that the Congress made a tactical blunder. There was no difference in social and economic policy serious enough to make Congress-League Coalitions unnatural or unworkable, and the Muslims, therefore, felt rightly or wrongly that they were excluded from office merely because the Congress was essentially a Hindu body. This aroused resentment among the Muslims and so strengthened the authority of the Muslim League. Moreover, it increased the danger that political divisions in India would be drawn permanently on communal lines."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in his autobiography (at page 446), gives his reasons justifying the action of the Congress in the following words :

“As a matter of fact, the Muslim League had not acquired any great prestige and popularity at that time.The Congress, therefore, had no reason to take a Moslem Leaguer as a minister.”

According to Dr. Rajendra Prasad—

“Appointment of Muslim Leaguers as ministers in the provinces where the Congress has been returned in a majority would have been unconstitutional.” Dr. Rajendra Prasad has taken his stand on the theory on which the British Parliamentary Government is based. In England, a homogenous Cabinet is constituted from a single party committed to a particular political and economic programme. But, in India, political situation was complicated by the presence of majority and minority communities. Here creation of confidence in the minds of minority communities was an essential necessity, and real far-sighted statesmanship lay in winning them over by offer to share power and responsibility. It was a real misfortune for India that the requisite statesmanship was lacking at this critical moment of Indian history on the part of the Congress High Command.

Emergence of a body called Congress High Command

In the Congress hierarchy, the ultimate authority of the Party was, in theory, vested in the All-India Congress Committee, elected yearly by the Provincial Congress Committees. But, in practice, the policy and the tactics of the Party have always been controlled by a small body of Congress Executive known as the Working Committee of the Congress. From 1934, under the advice of Gandhiji, further step towards centralisation was taken when it was decided that henceforth Working Committee should no longer be elected but should be chosen by the President. Later on, a Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress was set up. This Board was a very useful and necessary institution to co-ordinate the activities of the Congress ministries in various provinces and to give them general guidance from the point of view of the basic policies of the Congress. But, in actual practice, instead of confining themselves to merely giving general guidance to the ministries, the Congress Parliamentary Board kept a very tight control over the provincial ministries. The result was that from this time onward the Provincial Congress ministers seemed to forget their responsibilities either to the provincial legislature or to the provincial electorates and but began to hold themselves responsible only to a powerful Central Authority unknown to the constitution—which came to be known as the Congress High Command.

The Congress High Command reduced the provincial autonomy and the idea of responsible government in the provinces to a mere sham and consequently healthy development of parliamentary government in the provinces suffered and has not been secured even up to the present day.

The Moslems felt that the Hindu majority provinces were being ruled by the dictates of the Congress High Command without paying the slightest regard to the wishes of the non-Congress Moslems. Impression gathered among the Moslems

that if they seek any office, power or privilege for themselves, they must seek it from within the Congress fold. Uneasy feeling began to grow among the Moslems.

In a speech at the Calcutta Session of the Muslim League, Jinnah said as follows :

"I welcome a policy of live and let live. I welcome an understanding in matters, economic and political. But we cannot surrender, submerge or submit to the dictates or the ukase of the High Command of the Congress which is developing into a totalitarian and authoritarian caucus" (Jinnah by M.H.S., p. 605).

There were some further acts of unwisdom on the part of the Congress. This was the first time when the Congress took up the responsibilities of administration and the Muslims watched as to how the Congress would live up to its professed national character. In the circumstances, the Congress authorities ought to have been very cautious over the Muslim susceptibilities, particularly in view of the fact that they refused the proffered hand of the League to form Coalition ministries. But unfortunately they were not circumspect and allowed the Muslims to have grounds for grievances, real or imaginary. The Mussalmans complained that in some legislatures proceedings started with the Vande Mataram songs, Gandhian Vidya-Mandirs were established here and there. Naming of schools intended for all classes and creeds as Mandirs, which smacked of idolatory, greatly offended the religious sentiment of the Muslims. The Congress flag was given the honoured position of almost a State flag. Apart from sentimental grievances as stated above, the Muslims complained that they were discriminated against in the economic and administrative fields and that their language Urdu was suppressed. In their enthusiasm for the propagation of Hindi, the Congress High Command invented a new language called 'Hindustani' for national and inter-provincial purposes. The Muslims of U.P. were, however, not prepared to give up Urdu which, they said, had been developed by joint efforts of the upper classes of Hindus and Muslims. They even quoted Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who said that Urdu had served the remarkable purpose in making Hindus grasp

Muslim culture and making Muslims grasp Hindu culture and thereby promote fellowship and common citizenship.' (Pakistan by Khalid Bin Sayeed, page 94). It was mostly on the language question that the U.P. Muslims raised their banner of revolt against the Congress. It is unfortunate that the Congress High Command has not even to-day visualised the danger of imposing Hindi or Hindustani upon unwilling people. Unfortunately, Gandhiji himself also failed to understand the psychology underlying the Muslim discontent. He himself added fuel to the fire by constantly talking about establishment of 'Ram-rajya' in India. Gandhiji, however, explained that by the term 'Ram-rajya' he meant perfect blissful government where everyone was happy. His explanation, however, did not improve matters. Suspicion lingered in the mind of the Muslims that Gandhiji and the Congress were conspiring to establish Hindu Raj and Hindu culture in India. Jinnah exploited the situation fully to his own advantage by rousing communal passion against Gandhiji and the Congress.

Rightly or wrongly, the entire body of Non-Congress Mussalmans were antagonised by the Congress by the manner and spirit of their administration. The anxiety of even the non-League Muslim leaders was reflected by their presence at the session of the Muslim League held at Lucknow in October, 1937. In his Presidential speech Jinnah said as follows :

"On the threshold of what little power and responsibility given, the majority community have clearly shown their hand that Hindusthan is for Hindus ; only the Congress masquerades under the name of nationalism, whereas the Hindu Mahasabha does not mince words. The result of the present Congress Party policy will be, I venture to say, class bitterness, communal war and strengthening of the imperialistic hold as a consequence."

(Jinnah by M.H.S., pp. 576-77).

It is to be noted that up to this time the influence of the Muslim League was least in the Muslim-majority-provinces of Punjab and Bengal. The Prime Ministers of these two provinces, Sir Sikander Hayat Khan and Maulavi Fazlul Haque, did not belong to the Muslim League. But, even they were

alarmed by the mentality shown by the Congress High Command and felt that unless all the Muslims organised themselves into one body, it would be difficult for them to make their existence felt. This was a momentous defeat for the policy of Gandhiji and the Congress High Command. It is tragic that the Congress High Command did not see the writing on the wall. Up to this time, the strength of the Muslim League had lain almost solely in the provinces where the Muslims were in a minority. Now the Muslims were thoroughly alarmed throughout India. As the temper of the Muslims rose, the authority of Mr. Jinnah grew with it.

Jinnah's mind was now made up and he was going to take some extreme step to prevent the establishment of Congress hegemony over all India. He was determined that the Muslim minority must not be left at the tender mercy of the Hindu majority under the tight control of Gandhiji and the Congress High Command. He now began to develop his two-Nation theory which had been working in his mind for some time. At the annual session of the Muslim League at Lahore, in March, 1940, he declared :

"Islam and Hinduism are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are in fact quite different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and the Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality, and this misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction, if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindus and the Muslims belonged to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literature.....Their aspect on life and of life are different..." (Mahatma by Tendulkar, p. 268, Vol. 5).

The aforesaid ideas of Jinnah found embodiment in the resolution that was passed in the Lahore session of the Muslim League held in March, 1940 :

"Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitution plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following

basic principle, namely, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary, and that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in North Western and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign." (Do.)

Jinnah was now on war-path. Intense hatred of the Congress and Gandhi took possession of his soul. At the annual session of the Muslim League held at Patna, he had already declared in a thundering tone that he had no hesitation in saying that the genius behind the Congress attitude and the Congress policy was no other than Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who was out to destroy the ideals with which the Indian National Congress was started. He continued—'Gandhi was the one man responsible for turning the Congress into an instrument for the revival of Hinduism and for the establishment of Hindu Raj in India, and that he was utilising the Congress for the said end.'

(Jinnah by M.H.S., p. 633).

With the passing of the Lahore Resolution of 1940, old Nationalist Jinnah, the great sentinel of the Indian National Congress, the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity, began a new and tragic chapter in his life. The new Jinnah proved to be a menace both for India and the Indian Mussalmans. It is perhaps one of the most tragic events in Indian history.

CHAPTER XXIV

Outbreak of the World War II and its Repercussions on Indian Politics (1939-1941)

With the rise of Hitler and Nazism, war was inevitable in Europe. Temporary peace was purchased by the British Premier, Neville Chamberlain and the French politicians by the Munich Pact of 1938. But the aggressive mood of the Nazis continued as before, and within a year of the Munich Pact, circumstances compelled the British Government to declare war on Germany on 3rd September, 1939. On the same day, India was also declared a belligerent country by a Viceregal Proclamation.

Immediately thereafter, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, invited Gandhiji, Jinnah and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes to Simla. Gandhiji's response was prompt and he went to Simla by the first available train. His first reactions are described below in his own words :

"As I was picturing before him (the Viceroy) the House of Commons and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down, I became disconsolate I was not then thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled.

"My sympathy for England and France is not the result of momentary emotion or, in crude language, of hysteria....." (Tendulkar, pp. 160, 163, Vol. 5).

While showing his sympathy for England and France, Gandhiji made it clear to the Viceroy that he has come to him in his individual capacity as he had no instruction or mandate from the Working Committee. He told the Viceroy that if there was to be any understanding on the matter, it would have to be between the Congress Working Committee and the Government.

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha to consider the situation that arose out of the Viceregal Proclamation

declaring India a belligerent country. After intense deliberation lasting for several days, the Congress Working Committee passed the following resolution on the 15th September, 1939 :

“The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe..... Since the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people..... the Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

“The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism..... The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it..... But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom she possesses taken away from her.

“The crisis that has overtaken Europe..... is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium is established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of domination and exploitation of one country by another..... Only on that basis a new order can be built up. In the struggle for that new world-order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate Imperialism in India and elsewhere.

“The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their

war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present..... The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action to-day and give shape to the future.

"The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflicts and controversy and in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world."

In the Working Committee, Gandhiji fought a lonely battle by urging unconditional support to the British, but he was not successful. Gandhiji's comment on the aforesaid resolution was as follows :

"The Working Committee's statement on the world-crisis took four days before it received final shape. Every member expressed his opinion freely on the draft that was at the Committee's invitation prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally."

(Tendulkar, p. 166, Vol. 5).

Later on, the Muslim League passed its resolution on the war : it expressed its deep sympathy with the Allied cause but as a counter-poise to the Congress resolution it demanded an assurance from the Government that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India would be made, nor any constitution framed, without the consent and approval of the Muslim League.

Meanwhile, the Congress Working Committee expressed its dissatisfaction with the attitude taken up by the Government on its resolution and called upon the various Congress Ministries to resign. Accordingly, towards the end of October, 1939, they all resigned. When the news of resignation of the Congress Ministries reached Jinnah, he called

upon the Muslims to observe the coming 22nd December, as a 'Day of Deliverance and Thanks giving' to signify their relief from the Congress tyranny. Resignation of the Congress Ministries produced a change in the attitude of the Viceroy towards the Congress. There was no longer any necessity from him to woo the Congress so far as the war efforts were concerned because the Governors were in power in the Provinces after the resignation of the Congress Ministries. Jinnah took full advantage of the situation and made the Muslim League give an assurance of support and co-operation on behalf of the Muslims of India in the war efforts provided that the demands of the Muslims were met. In a letter, dated 23rd December, 1939, addressed to Jinnah, the Viceroy gave the requisite assurance to the League: "I can assure you that His Majesty's Government are not under any misapprehension as to the importance of the contentment of the Muslim Community." Henceforth the Viceroy and the British Government began to bolster up Jinnah and the Muslim League at the expense of the Congress. "With the Congress in the wilderness and Jinnah's hands considerably strengthened, waverers among the Muslims began trickling into the League."

It may be mentioned here that while the Viceroy was at Bombay in October, 1939, a joint protest by the Liberals (represented by Sir Chimanlall Setalvad), the Scheduled Castes (represented by Dr. Ambedkar), the Hindu Mahasabha (represented by V. D. Savarkar) and the Parsis (represented by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir) presented a joint representation to the Viceroy drawing his attention that there were other parties in the country besides the Congress and the Muslim League. Their grievances were, however, mostly against the Congress authoritarianism. They particularly stressed that to concede the Congress claim to be the only party in the land would be a death blow to democracy.

Though at the first interview with the Viceroy after the outbreak of the war, Gandhiji showed great sentimental sympathy towards England and her Allies and offered unconditional support to them, but with lapse of time there came a change in his attitude. Later on, he explained that the unconditional

support he offered was nothing more than moral support on purely non-violent basis. Hardening of his attitude was manifest at Patna where the Congress Working Committee had met on 28th February, 1940 for the purpose of drafting the policy resolution which was to be moved at the next sitting of the Congress at Ramgarh. Maulana Azad was the President-elect of this Congress. The resolution began with a severe indictment of the British rule in India and demanded complete independence. It expressed its inability to participate in a war undertaken for imperialistic ends. Lastly, it threatened a resumption of the Civil Disobedience movement which, it said, would follow as a necessary corollary to the withdrawal of the Congress Ministries.

The passing of the Ramgarh resolution was regretted on all sides outside the Congress circles. The Liberal leaders criticised it as showing 'complete disregard of the realities of the internal and international situation.' Jinnah characterised the resolution as 'completely devoid of statesmanship. England was now in the midst of a life and death struggle. At this catastrophic moment of England, Jinnah offered co-operation, while Gandhiji first wobbled and then threatened Civil Disobedience.

It is, therefore, natural that after the passing of the Ramgarh resolution—with its threat of civil disobedience—the Viceroy and the British Government definitely turned their back on the Congress and began to encourage Jinnah and the Muslim League in every possible way. Unequivocal assurance was given to the League that its viewpoint would always be respected.

Soon after the Ramgarh session of the Congress, the war situation became very bad for the Allies. Holland and Belgium were run over by the German Army and French resistance also collapsed. The British Expeditionary Force itself met with a major disaster at Dunkirk and a German attack on England was imminent. The Congress Working Committee met at Delhi to consider the new situation. At this juncture, Gandhiji had a brain-wave and his ideas of 'Ahimsa' and 'Non-violence' overwhelmed him. 'It fills me with the utmost non-violence,' he

said, 'I cannot think of a better thing to offer to Great Brit and the defeated nations than non-violence.' (Tendulkar, p. Vol. 5). He now wrote his famous letter 'To Every Briton.'

"I appeal to every Briton..... to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of the relations between nations.....

"I venture to present you with a nobler and braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms.....

"You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them." (History of the Congress by Pattabhi Sitaramayya, p. 218, Vol. 2).

Comment is unnecessary on this unworldly statement by way of contrast, the clarion call of the new British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, is worth recording:

"We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields, and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender."

Churchill's Non-Surrender speech roused a spirit of stubborn defiance in the hearts of the British people who mightily resisted the tidal wave of German aggression and ultimately destroyed Hitler and his Nazism.

Gandhiji's mind was now set in tune with the ideas he expressed in his letter 'To Every Briton.' He felt that time has come for non-violence to establish itself. Various ideas about Ahimsa and Non-violence began to cross the mind of Gandhiji (see Pattabhi's History of the Congress, pages 191-92):

"Suddenly he saw a new light. All the past history of the Congress vanished out of his view as if it were a morning mist that was dispelled by the rising sun. A conflict had now come definitely into more marked being than ever before. How could Gandhi, with such pronounced views, so far "removed from the accepted conventional views of the day, lead the day?"

"If the Afghans came, let us die before them. Even if I have the whole of India today I should do the same. I don't want the army. Similarly with regard to dacoities. That will be the State that the Congress will take over..... He felt that time came for non-violence to establish itself."

"If the Congress could not abstain from the use of force, Congress must not seek power until it acquired non-violent control over the masses..... The Working Committee would be guilty of betraying their trust really by abandoning non-violence. It must accordingly declare to India that it would lead the nation to a discarding of arms in repelling foreign attack and would develop a band of non-violent men who would become a living wall against the aggressor. *This requires a purge of its doubtful members, or preferably a voluntary retirement of those who have no faith in non-violence.*"

The plain meaning of the ideas contained in the last paragraph is that all non-Gandhians should get out of the Congress and it should consist only of Khaddar-clad brain-washed Gandhians to preach Gandhism throughout length and breadth of the country. There should be no other politics in the country except Gandhism.

The Working Committee was in a great dilemma as its leading members were rather sceptic about the application of the Gandhian ideas. Ultimately the Committee passed the following resolution:

"They recognise that Mahatma Gandhi should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way and therefore absolve him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue under the conditions at present prevailing in India and the world in regard to external aggression and internal disorders."

(P. Sitaramayya, pp. 192-193 Vol. 2).

After absolving Gandhiji from the Congress political programme, the Congress Working Committee held an emergency meeting at Delhi from 3rd to 7th July and took realistic view of the dangerous situation. By way of offering a conciliatory gesture to the Government, it passed a resolution pledging full support towards the effective organisation of the defence of the country provided there was established a provisional national Government at the Centre with an immediate declaration of full independence for India. The real author of this resolution was Chakravarti Rajgopalachariar. Towards the end of July, the All India Congress Committee met at Poona and ratified the above resolution. It was what is known as 'Poona Offer' on the part of the Congress.

In response to the aforesaid Poona Offer, the Viceroy, under the instruction of Mr. Amery, the Tory Secretary of State for India, made an announcement on the 8th August on behalf of the British Government which came to be known as the 'August Offer.' But unfortunately the said offer contained a declaration that—

"The Government could not contemplate the transfer of its responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government the authority of which was denied by large or powerful elements in India's national life, nor could it be a party to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a system."

(Mahatma by Tendulkar, Vol. 5, p. 317).

It was most unfortunate that such an unstatesmanlike reply was given to the conciliatory gesture made by the Congress, and naturally the Congress felt that it had been 'badly let down' and the Working Committee met immediately and placed on the record that—

“the rejection of the Congress proposals is a proof of the British Government's determination to continue to hold India by the sword.”

(Mahatma by Tendulkar, p. 318, Vol 5).

The All-India Congress Committee met at Bombay on the 15th September. Maulana Azad, the Congress President, declared:

“The offer Great Britain has made through the Viceroy is not worth looking at. These events made us decide again to request Mahatma Gandhi to assume the active leadership of the Congress. I am glad to inform you that he has agreed to do this, as now there is no difference whatsoever between him and the Working Committee.” (Mahatma by Tendulkar, Vol. 5, p. 318).

After assuming the active leadership of the Congress again, Gandhiji started a non-violent battle again. This new battle was not to be on a mass-scale but was to be limited to some selected individuals. The first person to be selected as a Satyagrahi was a hitherto-unknown inmate of Gandhiji's Ashram, named Vinoba Bhawe, who, later on, became a well-known figure as the Leader of Bhoodan Movement. The basis on which this individual Satyagraha was started was the fundamental right of freedom of speech. He declared—

“I must have the right to state freely what I feel about this war..... I claim the liberty of going through the streets of Bombay and saying that I shall have nothing to do with this war, because I do not believe in this war.”

(Mahatma by Tendulkar, Vol. 5, p. 323).

This individual Satyagraha movement proved rather ineffective and ultimately it fizzled out.

Very soon there was again conflict between Gandhiji and the Working Committee. This conflict arose when on 7th December, 1941, Japan struck at Pearl Harbour and rushed towards Malay and Singapore and the war was brought almost to India's doors. Both Gandhiji and the Working Committee had now to take a realistic view of the menacing situation. Once more, Gandhiji asked to be relieved of his leadership of the Congress.

Gandhiji's occasional conflicts with the Congress and the Congress Working Committee and his periodic retirement from the Congress to devote himself to his so-called constructive work provide a fine clue to the psychology of Gandhiji. These conflicts were more apparent than real and were deliberately created by him to achieve some purpose. His occasional withdrawal from the Congress was also towards the same end. His leadership of the Congress and then withdrawal from it and subsequent resumption of the leadership were really part of his battle-tactics against the British and did not arise out of any high ethical principle of non-violence.

Mr. E. M. S. Namboodripad in his book 'The Mahatma and the Ism' says: (at p. 94):

"The question at issue between the Congress Working Committee and Gandhiji was, by no means, the ethics or otherwise of the use of violence in national defence, but one of how to negotiate with, and put pressure on the British.

"Gandhiji's advocacy of non-violence, pure and simple, his determination to fight the war efforts in a non-violent way, proved effective as a form of pressure against the British. The Working Committee, therefore, always put itself under his leadership whenever there was necessity for giving a threat of struggle or for organising a struggle.

"On the other hand, whenever there was an opportunity for negotiations with the British, the Working Committee took a 'realistic position' that negotiations could be conducted only on the basis of offering India's co-operation with the British if power is transferred. On

all such occasions, Gandhiji himself asked that he should be relieved of leadership and to which the Working Committee readily agreed. This evidently was an admirable arrangement which perfectly suited the basic strategy..."

Mr. Hiren Mukerjee in his book 'Gandhiji' (at page 133) says as follows:

"Gandhi was acting as what he was a saint and a politician at the same time, and that both he and the Congress, quite apart from whatever ideological professions were made from time to time, were at bottom concerned not so much with the morality or otherwise of the use of 'violence' in national defence as with the effectiveness of methods adopted to bring pressure to bear on Britain. Easy transitions were made from one stand to another. The Congress ceased to swear by non-violence when the chances for a negotiated settlement seemed bright. When it was necessary to frighten Britain, Gandhi with his stress on non-violence was requisitioned... It was an arrangement which Gandhi could, without violence to himself, be a party, because he was neither a complete politician nor an unbending saint."

Gandhiji's withdrawal and retirement from the Congress was really meaningless because whether he was in or out of the Congress, the Working Committee never took a step without seeking advice from him. So when the Working Committee absolved him from active leadership of the Congress, leaving him free to pursue his great ideal in his own way, it was nothing but a smoke-screen.

Dealing with the Gandhian and Congress activities during 1941-42, Namboodripad says (at p. 94):

"It was for the specific purpose of enabling the Congress Working Committee to carry on negotiations that Gandhiji gave up his leadership of the Congress towards the end of 1941 and in the beginning of 1942. While the negotiations were formally conducted by the Congress President and the Working Committee,

Gandhiji's advice was nevertheless sought at every stage. While Gandhiji himself kept formally out of the negotiations, his was the voice which was decisive in shaping the policy of the Congress negotiators. Furthermore, the moment the negotiations broke down, the moment it was clear that the British were not prepared to grant the minimum that was demanded of them by the Congress, Gandhiji once again came to the forefront as the leader of the anti-war, anti-British mass movement."

Now let us come back to the "August Offer." Mr. Amery did not, however, expect that the 8th August declaration of the British Government would raise such a storm of protest in the Congress circle. He became anxious to remove the impression that the August offer of the British Government implied any encouragement of the Pakistan scheme for the division of India. In November, 1940, he made a speech stressing the essential unity of India and the need of maintaining the same. He pointed out the disastrous effect of the Balkanisation of the South-Eastern Europe on its people. He said that his object was to lay down the foundation of a constitution which would reconcile Indian differences and preserve India united in essentials. He regretted that the spirit of 'India First' was not strong enough to overcome the insistence on impractical demands on one side, or undue suspicion on the other. The Muslim League reactions on Mr. Amery's speech was reflected in the following resolution of its Working Committee on 22nd February, 1941

(Transfer of Power by V. P. Menon, p. 104):

"The Working Committee view with disapproval the recent pronouncements of Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, which are likely to create grave apprehensions in the minds of the Mussalmans as they give an impression, contrary to his previous pronouncements, that His Majesty's Government are still contemplating the possibility of a constitution based on the economic and political unity of India.....

"It is unfortunate that Mr. Amery, having regard to his responsibility as the Secretary of State for India,

should have allowed himself to indulge in slogans such as 'India First.'

"Mussalmans of India are proud to be Indians and firmly believe in India for the Indians. It is in that spirit that the Lahore resolution was adopted, because the Mussalmans are convinced that it is the only solution of India's constitutional problems which will ensure peace, harmony and satisfaction among all elements, interests and inhabitants of this vast country."

The last paragraph of the aforesaid resolution is to be particularly noted. This brings us again to the famous Lahore resolution of 1940, otherwise known as Pakistan resolution. Did that resolution really ask for a division of India into two complete separate sovereign States? Or, did the Hindu and the Sikh Press, in their panic, see something in it which was not there? Perhaps, they were carried away by the two-nation theory developed by Mr. Jinnah. The wordings of the present resolution that "Mussalmans of India are proud to be Indians and firmly believe in India for the Indians. It is in that spirit that the Lahore resolution was adopted" clearly show that at that time it was far from the intention of the Muslim League that India should be absolutely divided into twain. This view is confirmed by a speech made by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, the then Premier of the Punjab, on the floor of the Punjab Legislative Assembly on the 11th March, 1941. We shall fully deal with that speech later on.

We may also draw the reader's attention to a letter written by Jinnah to Gandhiji on New Year's Day of 1940 (Jinnah by M. H. Saiyid, pages 655-658):

"More than anyone else, you happen to be the man to-day who commands the confidence of Hindu India and are in a position to deliver the goods on their behalf. Is it too much to hope and expect that you might play your legitimate role and abandon your chase after a mirage? Events are moving fast, a campaign of polemics, or your weekly discourse in the Harijan on metaphysics, philosophy and ethics or your peculiar doctrines regarding Khaddar,

Ahimsa and spinning are not going to win *India's freedom*. Action and Statesmanship alone will help us in our forward march. I believe that you might still rise to your stature *in the service of our country* and make your proper contribution towards leading *India* to contentment and happiness."

It is clear, therefore, that all that Jinnah and the Muslim League wanted at this time was a constitution which guaranteed the rights of self-determination for the Muslims in the Muslim-majority areas while retaining the fundamental unity of India.

CHAPTER XXV

Quit India vis-a-vis Gandhiji's Life-Mission (1942)

With Japan's entry into the World War II, the situation in India entered a new phase. Both America and China became anxious to have full co-operation of India in the prosecution of the war and put great pressure on Britain for the declaration of a new policy towards India for the purpose of bringing its whole-hearted support to the side of the Allies. In February, 1942, Chiang-Kai-Shek and his wife personally visited India and met the Viceroy and the Indian leaders. Rangoon fell on the 7th March and it seemed that an attack on India was imminent. President Roosevelt now became very anxious and renewed his pressure for granting Indian Independence, and sent his personal representative Col. Louis Johnson to India. Pressed on all sides, Winston Churchill consented to send Sir Stafford Cripps with some proposals towards Indian Independence. Sir Stafford Cripps arrived at Delhi on 22nd March, 1942, armed with a draft declaration from the British Government that it is ready to grant Independence to India after the termination of the War. In a Press Conference held on March 29, he explained why it was not possible to transfer power immediately. He said that as long as the War continued the British Government could not divest itself of the responsibility for the defence of India. When Gandhiji met Cripps and saw his proposals he said to him— 'Why did you come if this is what you have to offer? If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the next plane home.' It is said that he characterised the Cripps' proposals as 'Post-dated cheques on a crashing bank.' Thereafter, Gandhiji did not take further interest in these proposals. Rajgopalachariar, Nehru and Maulana Azad were, however, genuinely anxious to reach a workable settlement with Britain. But, abruptly, on the 11th April, 1942, Cripps cut short his conversations and left for London. There was no doubt that it was Winston Churchill himself who stopped the negotiations between the Congress and Cripps as he did not trust either Gandhiji

or the Congress. He believed that Gandhiji, with his ideas of pacifism and non-violence, would hinder all war efforts. Churchill was not prepared to take any risk with Gandhiji.

Nehru became very despondent after the departure of Cripps as he thought that the chances of settlement with Cripps were very bright. Even after sudden break of negotiations with Cripps, Nehru was generous enough to say—"In spite of all that has happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort... The problem for us is how to organise our own." Nehru was deeply perturbed by the Japanese advance and he spoke of organising independent resistance to the Japanese aggressors by means of guerrilla warfare which would be India's independent war-effort. Gandhiji's comments were—"I am sorry that Jawaharlal has developed a fancy for guerrilla warfare. But I have no doubt that it will be a nine days' wonder; it will take no effect; it is foreign to Indian soil."

Gandhiji, however, did a bit of furious thinking of his own after the departure of Cripps. In an article written on the 19th April, 1942, which appeared in '*Harijan*' of 26th April, Gandhiji gave first public expression to the theory which was to crystallize into his 'Quit India' move. In this article Gandhiji asserted that if the British were to leave India to her fate, as they had had to leave Singapore, non-violent India would lose nothing and Japan would probably leave India alone. In his view, the interests of both India and England lay in the orderly and timely withdrawal of the British Power from India. "I am not interested in independence after the war. I want independence now."

Gandhiji has described his autobiography as 'My Experiments with Truth.' 'Quit India' move of Gandhiji was perhaps the most momentous experiment he undertook in the course of his unique life. It is the outcome of the same ideas which prompted him to take a plunge in the Khilafat movement of 1920. There has always been a continuity of motive in all activities of Gandhiji from the time he took the lead of the Khilafat movement. In 1942, he felt that his 'Quit India' move will give him what he failed to achieve through Khilafat movement in 1920. If 'Quit India' movement is properly studied, it will reveal Gandhiji as a great crusader combining the strategy of a Napo-

leon with the cunning of a Machiavelli. Louis Fischer, the well-known American Journalist of the war-period, asked Gandhiji how and when the idea of 'Quit India' occurred to Gandhiji. In reply, Gandhiji said that soon after the departure of Cripps in the second week of April, 1942, the 'Idea' possessed him. 'It was during my Monday of silence that the Idea was born in me.'

His instincts helped him to choose the psychological moment for making his move. At that time in all fronts, the Allies were having reverses. In Egypt, Rommel was rushing towards Cairo and Suez Canal. In Russia and in China, situation was equally bad. So far as South-Eastern Asia was concerned Field-Marshal Anchinleck's biographer says as follows:

"With the Japanese in complete control of the whole South-east Asia, with Alexander bringing the remnants of a beaten Army out of Burma, with Japanese warships and aircrafts ranging out in the Indian Ocean, the general situation in April, 1942 seemed profoundly gloomy."

On April 23, the House of Commons met in secret session and heard the Prime Minister render as full an account as he could of the causes and consequences of the bitter reverses which had had to be borne. This dark moment of England Gandhiji chose for his 'Quit India' move. According to Maulana Azad, "Gandhiji's idea seemed to be that since the war was on India's frontier, the British would come to terms with the Congress as soon as the movement was launched." As soon as the idea came to his head, Gandhiji sent a draft resolution to be considered at the impending meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Allahabad.

Gandhiji's draft resolution was as follows:

"Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British Imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

"The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests.

"Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against British Empire..... If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

"The A.I.C.C. is, therefore, of opinion that the British should withdraw from India.....

"The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal.

"This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation... Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any design on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal, the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the Japanese forces....."

"The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers to India..... It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible man power....."

There was marked division of opinion among the Congress Leaders over the draft. The opposition to the draft was led by Pandit Nehru and C. Rajgopalachariar, while Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Kripalani supported it. Points of view of Nehru and Rajgopalachariar were as follows:

Nehru: "If Bapu's approach is accepted, we become passive partners of the Axis Powers..... The whole background of the draft is one which will inevitably make the world think that we are lining up passively with the Axis Powers. The

British are asked to withdraw After the withdrawal, we are to negotiate with Japan and possibly come to some terms with her.... You can't stop the Japanese by non-violent non-cooperation..... The whole thought and background of the draft is one of favouring Japan..... ”

Rajgopala- “I do not agree that if Britain goes away India chariar: will have some scope for organising itself..... Japan will fill the vacuum created by the British withdrawal..... Do not run into the arms of Japan..... ”

Then began Gandhian propaganda in the *Harijan*—(*Harijan*, 17th May, 1942):

“I ask every Briton to support me in my appeal to the British at this very hour to retire from every Asiatic and African possession, and at least from India. That step is essential for the safety of the world.....

“My people may or may not approve of this loud thinking. I have consulted nobody. This appeal is being written during my silence day.....

Harijan, 24th May:

“Hitherto, the rulers have said: ‘We would gladly retire if we knew to whom we should have to hand over the reins.’ My answer now is: ‘Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy.’
.....

“I have said in plainest terms that in my proposal there is no question of entrusting the administration to any person or party..... Under my proposal, they have to leave India in God's hands—but in modern parlance to anarchy, and that anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestricted dacoities. From these a true India will arise in the place of this false one we see.....

Harijan, May 31, 1942:

"Withdrawal of the hated Power is the only way to rid the land of the debasing hatred. The cause gone, hatred must cease.....

"So far as I can see, the two communities are unable to think or see things in their proper perspective so long as they are under the influence of the third Power."

Harijan, June 14, 1942:

"I waited and waited until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait..... That is why I have decided that, even at the risks which are obviously involved, I must ask the people to resist the slavery."

The scene now changes to Wardha where the Working Committee met for further deliberation on Gandhiji's ideas. Here also there was opposition from Rajgopalachariar, Nehru and Maulana Azad. Maulana Azad's description of the discussion at Wardha is as follows: (India Wins Freedom, p. 75):

"When the Working Committee began its discussions..... Jawaharlal supported me and then only up to a point..... Apart from Jawaharlal, who often agreed with me, the other members were generally content to follow Gandhiji's lead. Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani had no clear idea about the war. They rarely tried to judge things on their own, and in any case they were accustomed to subordinate their judgment to Gandhiji. As such, discussion with them was almost useless. After all our discussions, the only thing they could say was that we must have faith in Gandhiji. They cited the example of the Salt Satyagraha movement in 1930."

"Our discussions started on 5th July and continued for several days. I had on earlier occasions also differed from Gandhiji but never before had our differences been

so complete. Things had reached a climax when he sent me a letter to the effect that my stand was so different from his that we could not work together. If Congress wanted Gandhiji to lead the movement, I must resign from the Presidentship and also withdraw from the Working Committee. Jawaharlal must do the same. I immediately sent for Jawaharlal and showed him Gandhiji's letter. Sardar Patel also dropped in and he was shocked when he read the letter. He immediately went to Gandhiji and protested strongly against his action. Patel pointed out that if I resigned from the Congress Presidentship and both Jawaharlal and I left the Working Committee, the repercussions on the country would be disastrous. Not only would the people be confused, but Congress would be shaken to its very foundation.

"Gandhiji had sent me this letter early on the morning of 7th July. At about mid-day he sent for me. He made a long speech whose substance was that he had written in the morning in haste. He had now thought further over the matter and wanted to withdraw the letter. I could not but yield to his persuasion."

"We began to discuss in greater detail the various elements of the proposed movement... Jawaharlal said that what Gandhiji had in view was in fact an open rebellion, even if the rebellion was non-violent. Gandhiji liked the phrase and spoke of an open non-violent revolution several times."

The Working Committee's resolution at Wardha differed in only one fundamental respect from Gandhiji's Allahabad draft—in that the Congress agreed to the stationing of Allied troops in India to ward off Japanese attack. Gandhiji's change of front on this fundamental issue was perhaps due to two reasons: Firstly, the necessity of keeping the entire Working Committee united; secondly, the necessity of enlisting American sympathy. He was very keen to have American sympathy for his 'Quit India' demand. With that end in view, he wrote an article with the heading 'To my American Friends' for publication in the *American Press*:

“As I am supposed to be the spirit behind the much-discussed and equally well-abused resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on Independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my position, for I am not unknown to you..... Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau who furnished me through his essay on the *Duty of Civil Disobedience*, scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto this Last* transformed me overnight from a lawyer and a city-dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station, and Russia gave me a Tolstoy, a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my Non-violence. It was he who prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the down-trodden people of earth. So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of *Unto this Last*, I could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

“I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal or as it has been popularly called ‘Quit India’ with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants.” (See Pattabhi Sitaramayya’s History of the Congress, pp. 355-56, Vol. II).

One thing should be mentioned here. Gandhiji visualised and, it seems, actually desired that there should be a mass-rising of the people which would help to unleash a lot of mass-energy. He also visualised that the masses may rise not only against the British Government but also against the Indian landlords and capitalists. To Louis Fischer, the American Journalist, he said —“There may be fifteen days of chaos, but I think we would soon bring that under control.”

The Working Committee, after full deliberation lasting for more than a week, passed on 14th July, 1942, a resolution which

demanding that the British Rule in India must end immediately.

The Wardha resolution also said that should the appeal made to the British to quit India fail, then the Congress would be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted Non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle must be under the leadership of Gandhiji.

Jinnah immediately reacted and published the following statement:

“The latest decision of the Congress Working Committee on July 14, 1942, resolving to launch a mass movement if the British do not withdraw from India is the culminating point in the policy and programme of Mr. Gandhi and his Hindu Congress of blackmailing the British and coercing them to concede a system of government and transfer power to that government which would establish a Hindu Raj immediately thereby throwing the Muslims and other minorities and interests at the mercy of the Congress Raj.” (Transfer of Power by V. P. Menon, p.141).

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Srinivasa Sastri deplored the passing of the Working Committee resolution declaring them to be against the best interests of the country. Other parties in the country also condemned the Congress resolution. The British Government, as was to be expected, also reacted strongly. Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, declared in the House of Commons that the Government would not flinch from taking every possible step to meet the Congress challenge.

Gandhiji became more than a fanatic over his ‘Quit India’ move. It seemed as if he was under a spell. Leading members of the Working Committee were sceptic about his ideas and tried to argue with him but he was too powerful for them and he brushed them aside. At the Working Committee meeting at Wardha, Nehru made a supreme effort to dissuade Gandhiji from his hazardous course of action. According to Gandhiji himself—“He (Nehru) fought against my position with a pas-

sion which I have no words to describe..." The dissidents in the Working Committee surrendered only at the point of bayonet when the Mahatma threatened to break away from the Congress and 'out of the sands of India to create a movement which would be larger than the Congress itself.'

(Nehru, by Michael Brecher, p. 285).

Then the A.I.C.C. met at Bombay on the 7th August, 1942 to ratify the Wardha resolution. There Gandhiji said—

"Even if all the world's nations oppose me, even if the whole of India tries to persuade me that I am wrong, I will go ahead not for India's sake alone, but for the sake of the whole world."

(Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. I, p. 9).

With an inner certitude and determination, which staggered everybody, he overcame all opposition and rallied round him his 'old guards' for one more fight—the last, the biggest and the best—against alien domination (Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase by Pyarelal, Vol. I, p. 9). Gandhiji continued—"..... I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. Here is a *mantra*, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is—*Do or die*. We shall either see free India or die in the attempt I have pledged the Congress and the Congress has pledged herself that she will do or die."

The All-India Congress Committee in its meetings of 7th and 8th August, 1942, at Bombay fully endorsed the Working Committee's resolution of the 14th July. It was Pandit Nehru, who had by this time been completely converted to Gandhian views, now came forward to move the resolution calling upon the British to quit India at once. The resolution fully authorised the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale under Gandhiji's leadership, if its demand for immediate end of British rule was not conceded. The Government was ready for the challenge and in the night between 8th and 9th August, Gandhiji, the members of the Working Committee and other important Congress leaders were

arrested and taken into custody. Gandhiji was detained at Aga Khan's palace at Poona and other leaders were kept at Ahmednagar Fort. Gandhiji was released on medical grounds in May, 1944 and other leaders in June, 1945 after the termination of war.

Acharyya Kripalani, in a speech in the Lok Sabha on 4. 12. 61, said—

“Many members of the Congress Working Committee were against Quit India movement. Then Gandhiji said—

‘You Congress are a respectable and a very responsible organisation. You cannot take this gamble. But I have gambled all my life and I will do it alone.’”

Now let us see for what stake the great Gamble played. There is no doubt that Gandhiji sincerely believed that if the British quitted India, Japan would have no cause to attack India and would leave India alone. From that standpoint, his slogan ‘Quit India’ is quite understandable. Undoubtedly, this was a factor which acted on his mind but most probably his main motive force came from another direction. He believed that the great moment of his life had come when he would be able to fulfil his Life's Mission for which he came to India from South Africa. He saw his first chance during the Khilafat movement and he saw his second chance now. If the British were made to quit India, then there was no force in India which would be able to resist Gandhian ascendancy in India. The combination of the prophet and the politician in Gandhiji made him a formidable force. From 1920, he had triumphed all along and all opposition forces had surrendered to him except Jinnah who was the only obstruction in his way. Jinnah was now entrenched in a well-fortified position because the British Government and the British officials stood solidly behind him. Once these quitted India, Gandhi would crush Jinnah in no time. With the British gone and Jinnah crushed, the whole of India would lie at the feet of Gandhi who would then be ‘the Master of all I survey’ throughout the length and the breadth of the country—the Raj-Chakravarti or the Pope of the Holy Gandhian Empire in India. Gandhism will then be

fully entrenched in India and everybody shall have to obey all Gandhian dictations. Thereafter his preachers would preach through the world the message of Gandhism which will then reverberate round the world. This was probably the aim of his 'Quit India' gamble. This was the grand idea which inspired him and put him in a mood very near frenzy when he launched his 'Quit India' movement. It was impossible that mere desire to end foreign domination could have put him in that mood. Later on, when Gandhiji sabotaged the Cabinet Mission Plan brushing aside the advice of the majority of the Working Committee, he was inspired by the same motive. If one scrutinises the courses of action of Gandhiji, right from the day when he landed on the Indian soil in 1915, one would find that inspite of all his multifarious activities, he never forgot for a moment what he considered to be his Life's Mission—that he had a message to the World.

In this connection, Gandhiji's reply to the Poet Rabindranath Tagore, when the Poet put in a protest against some of the Gandhian tactics during the Non-Co-Operation days of 1921, will bear repetition—"My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that the message of Non-Co-operation, Non-violence..... is a message to the world. It must fall flat, if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered."

'Quit India' move of Gandhiji totally misfired and India had to pay the penalty for the attempt Gandhiji made to play the part of a World-Saviour. The penalty was the Vivisection of India. From the moment the Congress accepted the office in 1937, it was Gandhiji who was the chief Mentor of the Congress regime and he exercised his authority and power through the Congress High Command. During this period, for every fault committed, the Mentor must bear the ultimate responsibility. From the moment of acceptance of office and particularly from the moment of declaration of the war, each and every step of the Congress was erroneous and lacked wisdom for not taking into consideration the realities and practicabilities of the situation. Jinnah took full advantage of the Congress follies by strengthening and consolidating his posi-

tion both with the Muslim masses and the British Government. Jinnah and his Muslim League were no longer to be trifled with.

It is true that India was made a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian legislatures but nevertheless the Viceroy made every effort to keep the Congress and particularly Gandhiji on his side. As a matter of fact, he partially succeeded at the outset. But, later on, Gandhiji changed his mind and his attitude began to harden and he directed the Congress Governments to resign their offices. He also threatened the resumption of Civil Disobedience movement in the Ramgarh session of the Congress in the early part of 1940. Thus, Gandhiji created a situation which left no alternative for Lord Linlithgow but to woo Jinnah and the Muslim League. In these circumstances, to placate the Muslims, a clear assurance was given by the British Government that in drawing up the future constitution of India, full respect shall be paid to the Muslim sentiments and aspirations. The Seed of Pakistan was thus sown.

In his intense desire to fly in the ethereal region and to play the part of a Messiah, Gandhiji forgot the mundane interests of India. He did not see the red signs in the way. 'Quit India' move added fuel to the fire and burnt all obstructions in the path of the Muslim League for the creation of a separate Sovereign Muslim State. 'Quit India' movement cleared the way for the birth of Pakistan. Gandhiji's gamble ended in a boomerang against himself and India.

CHAPTER XXVI

Gandhian Activities after Release From Detention (1944-1945)

I—His attempts to appease the Government

After his release from detention in May, 1944 Gandhiji adopted an attitude which was a complete reversal of his earlier views and naturally this change of attitude caused a lot of confusion and misunderstanding. His new line of activity was started by giving a Press interview to one Mr. Stewart Gelder, a correspondent of the London paper '*News Chronicle*.' Why did Gandhiji give this Press interview? His biographer, Pyarelal, in '*Last Phase*,' Vol. I, p. 28, says:

"Having rightly sensed that what was queering the pitch of the Indo-British relations was distrust—distrust of the Congress, distrust of the Indian Independence, and almost allergic distrust of him, his non-violence and the Quit India demand. Gandhiji began to mobilise all the resources of fairness and goodwill to overcome the distrust."

Purport of his talk to Mr. Stewart Gelder was that he himself recognised that the world has moved on and changed tremendously from 1942 to 1944 and now there could be no question of revival of the Civil Disobedience movement. He also expressed his readiness to advise the Congress that full co-operation should be given towards war efforts if Indian Independence was immediately declared and a national Government formed. He further said that if he could meet the Viceroy he would tell him that it was his purpose to help and not to hinder the war efforts of the Allies. As regards the motive of this Press interview,—'it was his (Gandhiji's) individual effort to end the present deadlock. They are addressed more to the powers that be than to the people' (see *Mahatma and I*sm by Namboodripad, p. 101). He also wrote to the Viceroy as follows:

"I am prepared to advise the Working Committee to declare that, in view of the changed conditions, mass Civil Disobedience, envisaged by the resolution of August, 1942, cannot be offered and that full co-operation in war effort should be given by the Congress, if a declaration of immediate Indian Independence is made and a national Government responsible to the Central Assembly be formed subject to the proviso that during the pendency of the war, the military operations should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India. If there is a desire on the part of the British Government for a settlement, friendly talks should take the place of correspondence. But, I am in your hands."

(Tendulkar, p. 263, Vol. 6).

Lord Wavell's reply was dated 15th August, 1944, when the victory of the Allies was certain and already in sight. In these circumstances it is not difficult to foresee what would be the Viceroy's reply. Gandhiji's offer of Congress participation in the war was rejected with thanks and his request for an interview was refused. The gist of the reply was that the British were not in need of Congress help in the war nor the Congress was in a position to revive the civil disobedience movement. Maulana Azad's comment on the attempt of Gandhiji to appease the Viceroy was as follows:

"Gandhiji's step in approaching the Government was ill-timed. It will be recalled that when the hostilities began, I had tried hard to persuade the Congress to take a realistic and positive attitude towards the war. *Gandhiji at that time had taken the stand that political independence of India was no doubt important but adherence to non-violence was even more important.* His declared policy was that if the only way of achieving Indian Independence was to participate in the war, he for one would not adopt it. Now he said that the Congress would co-operate with the British if India was declared free. *This was a complete reversal of his earlier views.*" (India Wins Freedom, p. 94).

Maulana Azad's remarks about the hypocrisy of non-violence is also very interesting (India Wins Freedom, pp. 94, 201-02):

"Now I am writing in 1957 and looking at events in retrospect, I cannot refrain saying that there was an astonishing transformation in the attitude of some of his closest followers on the question of violence versus non-violence. Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Acharyya Kripalani and Dr. Prafulla Ghosh had wanted to resign from the Working Committee when the Congress passed a resolution that it would support the war effort if the British declared India free. *They wrote to me that for them non-violence was a creed and even more important than Indian Independence.* When, however, India did become free in 1947 not one of them said that the Indian Army should be disbanded. On the contrary they insisted that the Indian Army should be partitioned and brought under the immediate control of the Government of India. This was contrary to the proposal made by the Commander-in-chief of the time. The Commander-in-chief suggested that for three years there should be a joint army and a joint command but they would not agree..... What surprised me most was the opposition of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He was a pacifist and wedded to non-violence. He now took the lead in insisting on a division of the Army....."

"I am convinced that if the Army could have remained unified we would have avoided the rivers of blood which flowed immediately after independence. Army was divided on the basis of communities..... Till now there had never been any communal feelings within the Army..."

II—Rajagopalachariar and Gandhiji offer Pakistan to Jinnah (1944)

Rajagopalachariar has always been a man of independent thinking. We have seen how he fought his own lonely battle over Gandhiji's 'Quit India' move. After the failure of the Cripp's Mission, Rajagopalachariar came to the conclusion that time had come to concede Pakistan to the Muslims. Not content with merely expressing his views generally, he sponsored a resolution in the Madras Congress Legislature Party recommending to the All-India Congress Committee to acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation. The reasonings on which Mr. Rajagopalachariar based his conclusions are well-expressed in the resolution itself which ran as follows:

“.....inasmuch as the Muslim League has insisted on the recognition of the right of separation of certain areas from United India upon the ascertainment of the wishes of the people of such areas as a condition precedent for a united national action at this moment of grave national danger, this party is of opinion and recommends to the All-India Congress Committee that to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a national Government at this grave crisis for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is a most unwise policy and that it has become necessary to choose the lesser evil and acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation.....”

(India Wins Freedom, pp. 67-68).

Loud protests were made by Congressmen that a member of the Working Committee should associate himself with a resolution that was so much against the declared policy of the Congress. It was an act of gross breach of discipline on his part but no disciplinary measures were taken against him. He, however, expressed his regret for acting without consulting the Working Committee and the President, and resigned from the Committee.

Rajagopalachariar was not the man to keep quiet whenever an idea had taken possession of him. He now attempted to interest Gandhiji in his scheme and he was quite successful in his attempts. Pyarelal, in his book, *Mahatma Gandhi—the Last Phase* pp. 68-69, Vol. I, has described these attempts in the following words:

“Ever since the arrest of the Congress leaders in August, 1942 (Rajaji was not arrested because of his known opposition to ‘QUIT INDIA’) Rajaji had been striving to bring about a rapprochement between the Congress and the Muslim League for the solution of the political deadlock. An intellectual child of the Age of Reason with unbounded faith in his power of persuasion, Rajaji felt that if the Congress and the Muslim League could be brought together on a common platform, the battle of independence would be won in no time. He had further persuaded himself that if the Congress agreed to the right of self-determination for the Muslim-majority areas, as demanded by the Muslim League, the League would join hands with the Congress in demanding Indian independence and it would not then be possible for the British Power to refuse their joint demand.

“During Gandhiji’s fast in the Detention Camp, therefore, when the jail gates were temporarily forced open, Rajaji took the opportunity to put before him a formula for bringing about a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League. The salient features of his formula, later known as the Rajaji formula, were: (1) The Muslim League should endorse the Indian demand for independence and co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a Provisional Interim Government for the transitional period; (2) the Congress would agree after the termination of war to the appointment of Commission for demarcating contiguous districts in the North-West and North-East of India, wherein the Muslims were in absolute majority (3) in the areas thus demarcated a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult franchise or some equivalent device would

decide the issue of separation of India. If the majority decided in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from India, such decision should be given effect to (4) in the event of separation, mutual agreement would be entered into for safeguarding defence, commerce, communications, and other essential matters; and finally (5) these terms would be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.

“Gandhiji did not need a moment’s consideration to give his approval to it. Armed with his approval, Rajaji approached Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League.”

On his release from detention on 6th May, 1944, Gandhiji himself took initiative in the matter and wrote to Jinnah that he wanted to meet him with a view to discuss the Rajaji formula. It may be remembered that, in 1937-38, Jinnah wrote letter after letter to Gandhiji for personal discussion with him on Hindu-Muslim problems, but then Gandhiji took scant notice of Jinnah’s request and asked him to contact Maulana Azad in the first instance. Now the wheel turned the full circle and it was Gandhiji who was suppliant for an interview with Jinnah.

The reasons which prompted Gandhiji to renew the Rajaji offer of Pakistan to Jinnah are given by his biographer Pyarelal in ‘Last Phase’ Vol. I, page 99:

“How could Gandhiji give his approval to the Rajaji formula and how dared he concede the principle of Pakistan? Had he not called the Partition proposal an untruth and India’s vivisection a sin? Some critics asked. Gandhiji explained that what he had agreed to was not different from the self-determination principle to which the Congress Working Committee was committed. It implied conceding the right to separate to such areas as might want it, after ascertaining the wishes of the inhabitants of that area through a properly conducted plebiscite, consistently with the safety, integrity and economic progress of the country as a whole...

“The Rajaji formula conceded the essence of the League’s demand, in so far as it was reasonable, said

Gandhiji. He did not mind if it was given the name of Pakistan.....

"If the object was to create a unit where there would be the fullest scope for the development of Muslim religion and culture and for the expression of the talents and personality of the leaders of the Muslim community, without being overshadowed by more outstanding talent which they feared in Undivided India, his formula would give full satisfaction...

"He had the highest regard for Jinnah's single-mindedness, his great ability and integrity which nothing could buy. Surely, Jinnah, the patriot, would not insist on freedom to engage in a fratricidal war... That is why he had knocked at his door, presented his cards to him for examination and entreated him to produce his without any mental reservation....."

On the 17th July, Gandhiji wrote in Gujarati the following letter to Jinnah: (Tendulkar, p. 268, Vol. 6).

"Brother Jinnah,

There was a time when I was able to induce you to speak in mother-tongue. To-day I venture to write to you in the mother-tongue. I have already suggested a meeting between you and me in my invitation from jail. I have not yet written to you since my release. To-day I feel prompted to do so. Let us meet whenever you wish. Do not regard me as an enemy of Islam or of Indian Muslims. I have always been a servant and friend to you and mankind. Do not disappoint me.

Your Brother,
Gandhi."

Prompt came the reply in English from Srinagar, in Kashmir, where Jinnah was recuperating his health. The letter ran as follows:

"..... I shall be glad to receive you at my house in Bombay on my return, which will probably be about the middle of August. By that time I hope that you will have recuperated your health fully and will be returning to

Bombay. I would like to say nothing more till we meet. I am very pleased to read in the Press that you are making very good progress, and I hope that you will soon be all right." (Do).

The preliminary conversation of Rajaji together with the formula evolved by him with the approval of Gandhiji raised a hope in Jinnah's mind that Gandhiji was coming to finalise the talk about Pakistan. In a Press statement dated 5th August, 1944, Jinnah used the term 'Mahatma' about Gandhiji and appealed for calm consideration of the points of dispute between the Congress and the League. He said—"It has been the universal desire that we should meet. Now that we are going to meet, help us. We are coming to grips. Bury the past." The meeting between the two leaders was somewhat delayed owing to illness of Jinnah. Ultimately they met on the 9th September at Jinnah's residence in Malabar Hill. Jinnah, being in optimistic mood, was very pleasant and courteous. He came out into his porch to receive him and at the time of his departure he escorted Gandhiji back into his car. Both of them posed for a photograph in which Mr. Jinnah appeared to be in a happy mood. Conversation between them continued for 18 days. Gradually this happy sign disappeared. Both of them became cautious and it was arranged that after each meeting their conversations should be confirmed in an exchange of letters.

After all sorts of evasive and academical talks covering days and days, they touched the real problem in a practical manner and discussed as to how the cutting and slicing of the provinces would be done when the time for actual Partition would come. The letter of Gandhiji, dated 24th September, shows that he was ready to recommend to the Congress and the Country the acceptance of the claim for Partition of India into two sovereign States. Extracts from the said letter of Gandhiji are given below (Hector Bolitho's Jinnah, pp. 148-149):

1. "I proceed on the assumption that India is not to be regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members, of whom the Muslims living in the North-West Zones, i.e., Baluchistan, Sind, North-West Frontier Provinces, and that part of Punjab

where they are in absolute majority over all other elements, and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India.

2. "The areas should be demarcated by a Commission approved by the Congress and the League. The wishes of the inhabitants of the areas demarcated should be ascertained through the votes of the adult population of the areas, or through some equivalent method.

3. "If the vote is in favour of separation it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate state as soon as possible *after India is free from foreign domination*, and can therefore be constituted into two sovereign Independent States.

4. "There shall also be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communications, customs, commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be the matters of common interest between the contracting parties."

Jinnah-Gandhi conversations broke down mainly over the terms contained in the 3rd paragraph above. Gandhiji maintained that at the first instance they should oust the third party with their joint action. When India has thus been made free from foreign domination, then by mutual settlement and agreement two separate States can be created in accordance with the desire expressed by the Muslim League in its Lahore resolution of 1940. Jinnah was not prepared to trust the words of Gandhiji or the Congress that they would give him Pakistan after the British quitted India. He wanted his Pakistan immediately now, before the foreign rulers left India. He said separation must come first and then matters of common interest between the two States would be settled by a treaty.

On Gandhiji's attempts to appease Jinnah at this stage, Mr. Hiren Mukherjee says as follows: (Gandhiji, p. 160):

"If comparable attempt was made earlier to wean the majority of Muslims away from the separatist tenden-

cies that were being sedulously cultivated, perhaps the Partition of India would have been prevented. But it was too late to stem the tide that the Muslim League had, with tacit support from imperialism, let loose. Gandhi had now a good word to say about the League's Lahore resolution of 1940; uttered three years earlier, it might have made emotional conquest of the Muslim mind, and the Jinnah spell, which had grown extraordinarily, might conceivably have been broken.....

"Matters had gone so far and tempers so frayed that even this approach, which in 1941-42 might have found a tremendous response, fell rather flat....."

Maulana Azad was very much against Gandhi-Jinnah conversation. His opinion is given below: (India Wins Freedom, p. 93):

"I think Gandhiji's approach to Jinnah on this occasion was a great political blunder. It gave a new and added importance to Mr. Jinnah which he later exploited to the full..... Mr. Jinnah had lost much of his political importance after he left the Congress in twenties. It was largely due to Gandhiji's acts of commission and omission that Mr. Jinnah regained his importance in Indian political life."

The long Gandhi-Jinnah conversation, covering eighteen days came to an end on the 27th September without achieving any fruitful result for the Congress. On the other hand, it was a definite victory on the part of Jinnah as he won more than half of his Pakistan battle. It enhanced Jinnah's position and prestige, and the cause of the League was immensely strengthened. The Sikhs and the Hindus of Punjab became terribly nervous about the possibility of a division of Punjab. Similarly, Hindus of Bengal were scared about another Partition of Bengal. The Sikhs and the Hindus of Punjab and Bengal felt that the Rajaji-Gandhi scheme was sending them to their doom. Savarkar shouted that the Indian provinces were not the private property of Rajaji and Gandhiji that they could make a gift of them to any one they liked.

CHAPTER XXVII

Simla Conference—Jinnah's Intransigence (1945)

Shortly after the failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks, another attempt was made for an agreed constitutional settlement between the Congress and the League. Since 1944, the Congress members had begun once more to attend the Central Legislature under the leadership of Bhulabhai Desai. At this time, the *de facto* leader of the Muslim League in the same legislature was Liaquat Ali Khan. Both of them were anxious for a settlement of the communal question so that two parties might participate in the formation of an Interim Government in the Centre. Lord Wavell encouraged both of them to continue their conversations. It was hoped by him that the formation of an Interim Coalition Government in the Centre would create a climate for a better and long-term understanding between the parties. Both the leaders came to certain tentative conclusions which came to be known as Desai-Liaquat Ali Pact. Its broad outlines were that the Congress and the League would form a government at the Centre consisting of equal numbers of persons nominated by the Congress and the League; representatives of the minorities like the Scheduled Castes and the Sikhs would also be included in the Government. The Interim Government thus formed would work within the framework of the present constitution and all the members of the Executive Council, except the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, would be Indians. In the first week of January, 1945, Desai went to Sevagram and placed the entire picture before Gandhiji. Gandhiji said that though he did not believe that Independence could come through parliamentary activity nevertheless he blessed the move of Bhulabhai, and encouraged him to go on. It was agreed between them that at the proper moment Gandhiji would tell the Working Committee that Bhulabhai had acted with his approval (see Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase by Pyarelal, pp. 123-124.).

Desai-Liaquat Ali talks which began so hopefully ended however disastrously. Jinnah made a public statement that he knew nothing about the talks between Bhulabhai Desai and Liaquat Ali and that the latter had made his proposals without any authority from the League. Liaquat denied that there was any 'pact' between him and Bhulabhai Desai. In a Press statement, dated the 18th September, 1945, Liaquat said—"Mr. Desai knows full well that there was no 'pact' but mere proposals which were only a basis for discussion." Liaquat, however, escaped with a mere admonition from his leader but for Bhulabhai Desai the incident meant political extinction and death from a broken heart. The Congress High Command, particularly Sardar Patel, took a grave view of the conduct of Bhulabhai after they were set free from detention. Bhulabhai pointed out that he had carried out negotiations with Liaquat Ali with the knowledge and consent of Gandhiji given in writing. Really, there was no reply to the defence of Bhulabhai who acted with all sincerity and with the best of intentions, keeping always the whole picture of the negotiations before Gandhiji. He did nothing in an underhand manner but nevertheless he was accused of entering into a conspiracy with the League and was denied a ticket for the next General Election. This was the reward given by the Congress High Command to a faithful follower who dared exercise independent judgment during the detention of the leaders in jail. Bhulabhai could not bear his public disgrace and died of heart failure very soon.

Why was Bhulabhai Desai so terribly punished for his part in Desai-Liaquat Pact? Is it for the part he played in the I.N.A. trial where in a memorable speech as the Defence Counsel he concentrated the nation's attention on the great role that was played by the I.N.A. under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose? The full-hearted admiration shown by Bhulabhai towards Subhas for his inspiring leadership of the I.N.A. was perhaps not liked by either Gandhiji or Sardar Patel.

Rajagopalachariar offered Jinnah substance of Pakistan without consulting the Congress. Nothing particular happened to him. He had merely to resign his seat in the Working Committee. In 1920, Gandhiji himself launched his Non-co-operation

movement without consulting the Congress. When Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya protested against the course of action taken by Gandhiji, he replied (Tendulkar, pp. 2 and 3, Vol. 2):

“In my humble opinion it is no Congressman's duty to consult the Congress before taking an action in a matter in which he has no doubts. To do otherwise may mean stagnation.....

“Every Congressman, every public body has the right, it is sometimes their duty, to express their own opinion, act upon it even and thus anticipate the verdict of the Congress. Indeed, it is the best way of serving nation...”

On this incident, Maulana Azad says as follows:

(p. 137, India Wins Freedom):

“This shocked Bhulabhai and affected his health... He felt that he has served the Congress faithfully and suffered in its cause and his only reward was rejection and disgrace..... I visited Bombay this time... His deepest regret was that Gandhiji, who knew all the facts, had not defended him against his critics... I tried to offer him consolation but it was of no avail. Soon after this, Bhulabhai died of heart-failure. I cannot but feel a deep regret whenever I remember the incident, for Bhulabhai had served the Congress well and was condemned without any justification.”

Lord Wavell was a disciple, admirer and biographer of Field Marshall Lord Allenby, a great war leader of the first World War. After the end of the said war, it was Lord Allenby who, as High Commissioner for Egypt, persuaded Lloyd George and other British political leaders to grant independence to Egypt. Lord Wavell was anxious to follow the footsteps of his old master and to follow his principles in the matter of granting independence to India. It was he who encouraged both Bhulabhai Desai and Liaquat Ali in their negotiations. When Desai-Liaquat talks ended in failure, he himself took the field. His first step was to make a direct approach to Winston Churchill,

the then British Prime Minister, to whom he wrote a personal letter. Referring to this letter, Mr. V. P. Menon says as follows in his book 'Transfer of Power' at p. 171:

"I had the privilege of seeing this remarkable document. It contained a bold and forthright expression of his views on the political situation as it existed at the time and pressed very strongly for a change of spirit, a change which would convince the average educated Indian that the British Government was sincere in its intentions and was friendly towards India."

Lord Wavell's approach and appraisal of the political situation in India was from a military angle. If the Indian leaders, both Hindu and Muslim had kept in their view the military defence of the country, they would have halted in their mad rush towards the vivisection of the country. From the point of view of the defence of India, its Partition has been a most disastrous event. From the political point of view, defence of a country must take precedence over every other consideration. As a soldier, Lord Wavell felt that the problem of India's defence required that India must remain as a political and administrative unit.

In a speech before the Central Legislature Lord Wavell said:

"You cannot alter geography. From the point of view of defence, of relations to the outside world, of many internal and external economic problems, India is a natural unit. That two communities and even two nations can make arrangements to live together in spite of differing cultures or religions, history provides many examples."

"Lord Wavell's hope was that if he could get the various party leaders to work together in an interim Government, he might be able to persuade them by patience and tact to come to some sort of agreement which would preserve the unity of the country. He hoped that problems like successful termination of war against Japan and, above all, preparations of plans for the post-war agricultural and industrial development of India, would one and all inject into the thinking of political leaders

a sense of realism and an awareness of the enormity of problems that faced India. Thus, instead of being absorbed in day-to-day personal bickerings, the new administrative problems and the result of working together to solve them would infuse into them a constructive and tolerant point of view." (Pakistan by Khalid Bin Sayeed, pp. 136-37). Hence with the utmost correct and pious wishes, Lord Wavell convened a conference of political leaders of India at Simla with the previous sanction of Winston Churchill. With a view to create good political atmosphere, Lord Wavell released on 15th June, 1945 all the members of the Congress Working Committee who were kept in detention from the days of the 'Quit India' movement. The Simla Conference began its deliberations on 25th June, 1945.

It is interesting to note that Maulana Azad, the President of the Congress was not included in the first list of invitees in this conference, but this mistake was corrected at the instance of Gandhiji himself. In his inaugural speech, the Viceroy proposed that, as an interim arrangement till the end of the War, the Viceroy's Council should be entirely Indianised with the exception of the Commander-in-chief and the Viceroy himself, and after the termination of the War, India would be free to frame her own constitution. Jinnah's attitude at this conference was most arrogant. He showed extreme discourtesy to Maulana Azad and refused to sit at the same table with him for a discussion. Further, he injected virulent communal poison during the discussions and took extreme attitude on the communal questions. It is not too much to say but for Jinnah, a happy solution on the communal question would have been arrived at the Simla Conference. Jinnah took an adamant attitude that the Congress must not have any right to nominate any Mussalman for the Viceroy's Council and that right must be conceded to the Muslim League alone, in other words, to Jinnah alone. The Viceroy said that it was an unreasonable demand on the part of Jinnah to which Jinnah retorted that if that be so then Muslim League would not co-operate in the Conference.

The Congress representatives present at the meeting in their desire for conciliation went to the utmost limit of conces-

sion by agreeing to a parity of representation between the Caste Hindus and the Muslims in the Viceroy's Executive Council. Even then Jinnah was not satisfied and did not budge an inch from his standpoint and consequently the Conference had to be abandoned. It is not known whether Winston Churchill had a hand in torpedoing the Conference as has been suggested by some. Whatever may be the true facts Lord Wavell took the responsibility of the failure on his own shoulders. By abandoning the conference, he showed an infirmity of purpose. If he was convinced, as he openly expressed that Jinnah's demand was an unreasonable one, then why did not he follow up his own initiative and act accordingly? If he had done that, it was certain that he would have got the support of the entire non-League Muslims and also of a considerable body of Leaguers, like Liaquat Ali and Hussain Imami among others, who were secretly pining for Hindu-Muslim settlement. There was no reason whatsoever on the part of Lord Wavell to pay undue respect to the sentiments of Jinnah. At this time, Jinnah's leadership was by no means supreme. In Punjab, it was the Unionist Party of Khizr Hayat Khan which ruled and not the Muslim League; in Bengal, the League Prime Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin had been defeated in the Assembly; in North West Frontier Provinces, a Congress ministry under Dr. Khan Sahib had been installed; in Sind and in Assam, the League position was by no means happy. In these circumstances, where was the justification for Lord Wavell to ruin the Conference by upholding the unreasonable demands of Jinnah? It was not the communal Mussalmans alone who gave strength to Jinnah's idea of Pakistan, but it was the British also. They encouraged Jinnah's communal intransigence which they found very useful to them for their own ends. They wanted to keep it alive for their own purpose, so that they might beat the Gandhian Congress with it.

When the World War was declared on 3rd September, 1939, the Viceroy immediately asked for co-operation both from Gandhiji and Jinnah and called both of them for an interview. Referring to this incident, Jinnah said later on (see Menon's *Transfer of Power*, p. 59):

“After the War..... I was treated in the same basis as Mr. Gandhi. I was wonderstruck why all of a sudden I was promoted and given a place side by side with Mr. Gandhi.”

With the declaration of the War and the intransigence of the Congress and Gandhi, Jinnah became a need for the British, both official and non-official, and they were determined to raise him up politically. Unfortunately unwise tactics on the part of the Congress under Jinnah's inspiration went also a long way to help Jinnah in his rise to power.

The failure of Simla Conference was a great triumph for Jinnah with an immense enhancement of his prestige. The undue respect shown to the unreasonable demands of Jinnah by the Viceroy against the moderate and middle of the path Muslim politicians was a clear directive to the Muslims in general that it is Jinnah and Jinnah alone who is able to deliver goods to them. The consequence was that the ranks of communally-minded Muslims increased and the position of the non-League Muslims was much weakened. Its effect on Punjab Muslim politics was disastrous in as much as it undermined the leadership of Khizr Hayat Khan and increased the power of the League. Jinnah now for the first time became supreme in the Punjab politics as well. Thus his 'intransigence' in the Simla Conference paid him high dividends. With all his pious wishes for an undivided India, Lord Wavell's infirmity of purpose lent strength to those who wanted to divide India.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Cabinet Mission (1946)

On the 8th May, 1945, the War in Europe ended officially. On that day the representatives of the German Military Command signed the document of surrender. Immediately, the Labour Party in England demanded the end of the Coalition Ministry headed by Winston Churchill. In July, the General Election was held and the Labour Government came into power with Mr. Attlee as the Prime Minister. On August 15, Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allies after the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the use of atom-bombs.

As soon as the Labour Government came into power, it decided to face the Indian problem. Less than a month after it took office, the Viceroy was summoned to London for a fresh examination of the whole problem of India. After returning to India, Lord Wavell made a policy statement on behalf of the British Government on the 19th September which read as follows:

“..... His Majesty's Government are determined to do their utmost to promote in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion the early realisation of full self-government in India.....

“It is the intention of his Majesty's Government to convene as soon as possible a constitution making body...

“His Majesty's Government are proceeding to the consideration of the content of the treaty which will require to be concluded between Great Britain and India.”

In making the aforesaid announcement, Lord Wavell emphasised the fact that, in spite of its having innumerable urgent post-war problems in England itself, His Majesty's Government had given top priority to the question of early realisation

of full self-government in India, and that this itself showed their earnestness towards meeting the Indian aspirations.

Lord Pethwick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, in a New Year's broadcast message to the Indian people said that there was no longer any need for denunciations or organised pressure to secure recognition of India's due position in the world. He wanted Indian people to realise that the British people earnestly desired that India should attain the status of an equal partner in the British Commonwealth. He further said: "The problem now is a practical one. It is to work out a rational and acceptable plan of action. It must be a plan under which authority can be transferred to Indian control under forms of government which will willingly be accepted by the broad mass of India's people—so that the New India will not be torn and rent by internal strife and dissensions."

Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister, made the following significant speech in the House of Commons by the middle of March, 1946:

"India herself must choose what will be her future constitution; what will be her position in the world, I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that they will find great advantages in doing so. In these days the demand for complete, isolated nationhood apart from the rest of the world, is really outdated. Unity may come through United Nations, or through the Commonwealth, but no great nation can stand alone without sharing what is happening in the world. But if India does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free peoples. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to help to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible."

Mr. Attlee was particularly anxious to expedite the matter and with that end in view he decided to send out a Cabinet

Mission, consisting of Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethwick-Lawrence and Mr. A. V. Alexander. The Cabinet Mission arrived at Delhi on the 24th March, 1946.

Now let us pause to look at the realities of the politico-communal situation which faced the Cabinet Mission on their arrival in India. Elections to the Central Legislative Assembly and to the various Provincial Legislatures had been held sometimes before the arrival of the Mission. Muslim League's victory was astounding in every field. The results of the elections showed that almost the entire Muslim electorate of India were ranged against the Congress. Jinnah's threat to Nehru in 1937 became a fact to be reckoned with in 1946. We might remember that flushed with pride at the overwhelming success of the Congress in 1937 elections, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared that there are only two parties—the British and the Congress—that count in the political evolution of the country and Jinnah's bold reply—'There is a third party—the Muslims whom the Congress will ignore at its own risk and peril.' A question arises in one's mind how far the success of the Muslim League in 1946 elections was due to the short-sightedness of the Congress High Command in refusing the proffered hand of the League in forming the Provincial Ministries in 1937 and to the so-called persecutions that the Muslims were alleged to have suffered during the Congress regimes of 1937-39. There is no doubt that these things created an adverse impression in the minds of the Muslim masses owing to the persistent League propaganda. But that does not supply the full answer to question. The true explanation is that in the meantime a momentous force had come into existence to give impetus to the forward march of the Muslim League towards separations, and it was the emergence of a new idea—the idea of 'Pakistan.' This new idea gave to the Muslim classes and masses of something to be proud of—creation of a separate Muslim State in which the Muslims will be supreme and where there would be an Islamic form of Government based on the laws of Quran and Shariat. In this way, the Muslim masses also became the camp-followers of the Muslim League which now gathered such strength that the Congress could no longer afford to ignore it.

The overwhelming and colossal victory of the Muslim League in these post-war elections made Jinnah a formidable force in Indian politics and almost an arbiter of India's destiny. On the eve of the Cabinet Mission's arrival in India, he called for a convention of all the elected members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures elected under the Muslim League ticket. The Convention made an unequivocal demand for a Sovereign Pakistan. It also warned the Cabinet Mission which had just then arrived in India that any attempt on its part to impose a Constitution contrary to the Muslim demand will be resisted with all the forces that the League might command. This was the situation which the Cabinet Mission found on its arrival in India and it was impossible for them to ignore it.

Though the Cabinet Mission realised the strength of the League position they were not prepared to go the full length of creating an independent Pakistan forthwith. They were anxious to find a via media wherewith after maintaining the fundamental unity of India full autonomy to the Muslim-majority provinces might be guaranteed. In other words, substance of Pakistan was to be granted to the League within the framework of a Federal India. They felt at first that it would not be difficult to come to an agreed solution as the Rajagopalachariar-Gandhi plan was already in the field. But it soon became clear that an agreed solution was impossible. In these circumstances, on the 16th May, 1946, the Mission propounded their own scheme, which was basically the Rajagopalachariar-Gandhi scheme with certain modification. The scheme had two parts—a long-term plan which dealt with constitution-making and a short-term plan dealing with the formation of an interim Government to carry out the administration of the country. The basic form of the long-term plan was a three-tiered scheme which was as follows:

I.....At the top there is to be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, which will deal with Foreign affairs, Defence and Communications;

- II.....At the bottom there would be provinces and States; all subjects other than Union subjects and all residuary powers will vest in them;
- III.....Substance of Pakistan is to be given to the League by means of 'Grouping' of the provinces in three sections which were to be as follows:
- Section A.....Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa;
- Section B.....Punjab, North West Frontier Provinces, Sind and Baluchistan;
- Section C.....Bengal and Assam.

Cabinet Mission's Plan was favourably received by the Press throughout India. Sincerity of the purpose of the Cabinet Mission was not questioned anywhere and its strenuous efforts to maintain the unity of India were also appreciated on all sides. To the Congress-minded Indians it offered a Common Union Centre and to the Muslim League it offered Muslim Zones in the North-west and North-east of India with full provincial autonomy. But the part of the plan relating to the initial grouping of the provinces was, however, bound to raise controversy. Trying to avoid the division of India on one hand, and confronted by the Muslim League's inflexible demand for a sovereign Pakistan on the other, the Mission evolved this part of the scheme. We shall later on see that the entire Cabinet Mission Plan ultimately foundered on this unfortunate part of the scheme.

Jinnah's criticism came out on the 22nd May. It was a cautious statement expressing some dissatisfaction but he did not recommend its outright rejection. The Council of the Muslim League met in New Delhi on June 6. Under Jinnah's direction, it accepted the plan propounded by the Cabinet Mission inasmuch as the basis and foundation of Pakistan were inherent in the said plan by virtue of the *compulsory* grouping of the Muslim majority provinces. It expressed its willingness to join the Constituent Assembly, keeping in view the opportunity

and the right of secession of provinces or groups from the Union which had been provided in the Mission's plan by implication. It finally declared that though a separate sovereign Pakistan was still its aim, it has accepted the Plan prompted by an earnest desire for a peaceful solution of the Indian Constitutional problem.

The Congress Working Committee held a preliminary meeting on the 24th May but they refrained from giving any final opinion on the statement. They pointed out certain inconsistencies in it on the subject of grouping of the provinces. In their opinion, the provision for 'initial grouping' was inconsistent with the freedom promised to the provinces in the matter of choice of the group in which it may want to join. Prompt came the reply from the Cabinet Mission. They said—

"The interpretation put by the Congress resolution on paragraph 15 of the statement to the effect that the provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed does not accord with the Delegation's intentions. *The reasons for the grouping of the provinces are well-known and this is an essential feature of the scheme and can only be modified by agreement between the parties.* The right to opt out of the groups after the constitution-making has been completed will be exercised by the people themselves, since at the first election under the new provincial constitution this question of opting out will obviously be a major issue and all those entitled to vote under the new franchise will be able to take their share in a truly democratic decision..."

The Congress Working Committee finally met on June 25, 1946 to deliberate on the Cabinet Mission Plan. Gandhiji revealed an unexpected change in his attitude in this meeting and advised wholesale rejection of the Plan with its short-term and the long-term parts. On the other hand, Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel were for a compromise. Maulana Azad, in his autobiography at page 150, says—"In our discussions in the Working Committee, I pointed out that the Cabinet Mission

Plan was basically the same as the scheme Congress had accepted. As such the Working Committee did not have much difficulty in accepting the main political solution contained in the plan.' In the end, the Committee only partially agreed with Gandhiji. It rejected the proposal for the formation of an Interim Government at the Centre but accepted the long-term proposal of Constitution-making with its own interpretation of disputed clauses.

How fundamentally Gandhiji and his colleagues differed with each other as to the course to be followed with regard to the Cabinet Mission Plan will be apparent from the following description given by Sri Pyare Lal as to the happenings on the morning of the 25th June when the Working Committee met to give their final decision:

"At 8 A.M. Bapu went to attend the Working Committee meeting. He asked me to read out the note which he had written to Cripps last night. He then addressed them very briefly: 'I admit defeat. You are not bound to act upon my unsupported suspicion. You should follow my intuition if it appeals to your reason. Otherwise you should take an independent course. I shall now leave with your permission. You should follow the dictates of your reason.'"

"A hush fell over the gathering. Nobody spoke for sometime. The Maulana Saheb with his unfailing alertness at once took in the situation. 'What do you desire? Is there any need to detain Bapu any further?' he asked. Everybody was silent. Everybody understood. *In that hour of decision they had no use for Bapu. They decided to drop the pilot.* Bapu returned to his residence.

"The Working Committee again met at noon and addressed a letter to the Cabinet Mission, rejecting the proposal for the formation of the Interim Government at the Centre and accepting the long-term plan with its own interpretation of the disputed clauses..... At noon, the Cabinet Mission invited the members of the Working Committee to meet them. *Bapu not being a member*

was not sent for and did not go. On their return nobody told Bapu a word about what happened at the meeting."

(Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, p. 239, Vol. I).

The Working Committee's decision of the 25th June was communicated to the Cabinet Mission on the same day. It treated the Congress decision as an acceptance of their plan of 16th May. Being fully satisfied with the apparent success of its labours, the Mission left for London.

The All-India Congress Committee met at Bombay on the 6th July, 1946, to ratify the Working Committee's decision of the 25th June. In this meeting, Gandhiji adopted new tactics. He was not the man who will take any defeat as final. On the other hand, he would snatch victory even out of defeat. He now professed to show agreement with the Working Committee's decision of the 25th June which was arrived at against his specific advice.

When the orthodox followers of Gandhiji made a show of protest against the change of attitude on his part and expressed a fear that the Constituent Assembly might prove a trap and snare, Gandhiji retorted—"A Satyagrahi knows no defeat... I am willing to admit that the proposed Constituent Assembly... has many defects. But..... if there are any shortcomings in the proposed Constituent Assembly, it is for you to get them removed... *I regard the Constitution Assembly as the substitute of Satyagraha. It is constructive Satyagraha.*"

(Pyare Lal, Last Phase, p. 245, Vol. I).

Nobody understood the inner meanings of the aforesaid ominous words of Gandhiji who knew his own mind and he was determined as ever to sabotage the Cabinet Mission scheme, in spite of its apparent acceptance by the Congress.

"The final phase of negotiations with the Cabinet Mission marked the beginning of that cleavage between Gandhiji and some of his closest colleagues which in the final phase of the Transfer of Power left them facing different ways....." The most noteworthy fact to be noticed was his open difference with his devoted follower and trusted lieutenant Sardar Patel. After

Working Committee's decision of the 25th June Gandhiji wrote a letter to Sardar Patel on the 1st July in which he said—"I see, we are drifting in different directions."

(Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, pp. 239, 240).

CHAPTER XXIX

Pandit Nehru becomes the Congress President and Throws a Bomb-shell at the League

League Retorts by Direct Action (1946)

The All India Congress Committee, which met at Bombay on the 6th July, 1946, installed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the President of the Congress. Maulana Azad had been continuing as President since 1939 and it was now 1946; and, therefore, in ordinary course a change was overdue. In the light of what happened immediately after, within the course of a week, it was quite clear that the change of pilot in the mid-stream, while the finalisation of the Cabinet Mission Plan was still to be achieved, was a major disaster. Here a word of tribute must be paid to Maulana Azad. He showed masterly qualities of head and heart during the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps and the Cabinet Mission. He always advocated counsel of moderation on Gandhiji and on the Working Committee. It was through his persistent efforts that the Congress Working Committee accepted the long-term proposals of the Cabinet Mission against the express advice of Gandhiji. He never agreed to be a mere rubber-stamp of Gandhiji and on many critical occasions opposed Gandhiji's views. He was indefatigable in his efforts to bring to a successful end the Viceroy's attempts to form an Interim Government. For the sake of establishing harmony between the Congress and the League, he was prepared to stand out of the Interim Government at first. For the sake of the Congress and communal harmony he tolerated insult after insult at the hands of Jinnah.

Maulana Azad stepped down from the Presidentship of the Congress with a deep feeling of self-satisfaction, (fully unjustified by the subsequent events) which he has described in the following words (India Wins Freedom, p. 151):

"The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan by both the Congress and the League was a glorious event in the history of the Freedom Movement in India. It

meant that the difficult question of Indian freedom had been settled by negotiation and agreement and not by methods of violence and conflict. It also seemed that communal difficulties had been finally left behind. Throughout the country there was a sense of jubilation and all the people were united in their demand of freedom....."

Installation of Pandit Nehru as the President of the Congress in 1946 was due to the personal intervention of Gandhiji himself against the considered opinion of almost all the Provincial Congress Committees who recommended Sardar Patel for the honour. Maulana Azad had been continuing as the President of the Congress since 1939. Gandhiji had, however, his own reasons, both sentimental and tactical, for making a change now. By this time it was clear to everybody that the British were quitting and that an independent India is coming into existence and, in the usual course of things, the President of the Congress would be the Prime Minister of India. Gandhiji was keen that this exalted position should be held by Pandit Nehru. In a speech at the Wardha meeting of the A.I.C.C. in January, 1942, Gandhiji said (See Michael Brecher on Nehru, p. 275):

"I have said for years and say now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says that he does not understand my language, and that he speaks a language foreign to me. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And, I know this when I am gone he will speak my language."

The assumption of the Congress Presidentship by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946 was an ill-fated day in the annals of the Indian History, badly affecting the destiny of India. As soon as he assumed his office he made a most indiscreet and provocative speech which brought immense miseries to the country and changed the whole course of Indian history. The said speech of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru may well be described as a match of Fate which set all India ablaze. Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel were amazed at the indiscretion of

Pandit Nehru and tried to nullify the effects of the speech but their efforts proved fruitless.

In the speech winding up the proceedings of the A.I.C.C., the new Congress President Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his usual impetuous and unthinking way, made an ominous utterance: "We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly." Later on, he made a deliberate statement at a Press Conference on the 10th July at Bombay. He declared that the Constituent Assembly would be a sovereign body, despite any policy statement that might be issued by the British Government. It would be absolutely Free to do anything it likes. It would not be bound by any condition and there was a big probability that there would be no 'grouping' when Union of India was formed. His exact words were as follows (V. P. Menon's *Transfer of Power*, p. 281):

"The big probability is, from any approach to the question, there will be no grouping. Obviously, section A will decide against grouping. Speaking in betting language, there is a four to one chance of the North West Frontier Province deciding against grouping. Then Group B collapses. It is highly likely that Bengal and Assam will decide against grouping, although I would not like to say what the initial decision may be since it is evenly balanced. But I can say with every assurance and conviction that there is going to be finally no grouping there, because Assam will not tolerate it under any circumstances whatever. Thus you see this grouping business, approached from any point of view, does not get us on at all."

Pandit Nehru's speech may be read along with what Gandhiji himself said at this meeting. The words used by Gandhiji were—"I regard the Constituent Assembly as the substitute of Satyagraha. It is constructive Satyagraha." There is not the slightest doubt that Pandit Nehru blurted out what was actually in Gandhiji's mind. They both meant that they have entered into the Constituent Assembly to fight the battle

of 'Grouping' and in that Assembly they would wrest victory which they could not get from the Cabinet Mission.

The aforesaid Press Statement of Pandit Nehru produced consternation in the Muslim League camp. It apprehended that the rights and benefits that have been promised to them under the Cabinet Mission Plan were in jeopardy. Jinnah's anger knew no bounds. He said that after this act of bad faith, Congress words could no longer be trusted. He accused the Cabinet Mission of having played into the hands of the Congress which got a Constituent Assembly under a false pretence. He felt sure that the Congress would utilise their brute majority in the Constituent Assembly to annul all the advantages that the Muslim League had got under the Cabinet Mission.

This statement of Pandit Nehru was perhaps the worst of all indiscreet statements that were ever made by any politician. 'It was a moment in history when circumspection should have been the order of the day. There was much to be gained by silence. The fortunes of India were in the balance, and one false move could upset them. Nehru chose this moment to launch into what his biographer, Michael Brecher, has described as 'one of the most fiery and provocative statements in his forty years of public life'... Did Nehru realise what he was saying? He was telling the world that once in power, Congress would use its strength at the Centre to alter the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought fit. The Muslim League (as had Congress) had accepted the Plan as a cut and dried scheme..... It was a compromise plan which obviously could not afterwards be altered in favour of one side or another (Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 28.)'

Maulana Azad writes in his autobiography as follows (*India Wins Freedom*, p. 156):

"I was extremely perturbed by this new development. I saw that the scheme for which I worked so hard was being destroyed through our own action. I felt that a meeting of the Working Committee must be held immediately to review the situation. The Working Com-

mittee accordingly met on August 8. I pointed out if we wanted to save the situation, we must make it clear that the view of the Congress was expressed by the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C., and that no individual, not even the Congress President, could change it.

"The Working Committee felt that it faced a dilemma. On the one side, the prestige of the Congress President was at stake. On the other, the statement which we had so painfully achieved was in danger. To repudiate the President's statement would weaken the organisation, but to give up the Cabinet Mission Plan would ruin the country.

"I must place on record that Jawaharlal's statement was wrong. It is not correct to say that Congress was free to modify the Plan as it pleased....."

The Congress was taken aback by the vehemence of Muslim opposition. In these circumstances with a view to appease the League, the Working Committee of the Congress met on the 8th August and passed a resolution expressing its genuine regret that the League had decided not to participate in the Constituent Assembly. The resolution, which was really addressed to the League, pointed out that neither the Working Committee nor the All India Congress Committee ever objected to the principle of grouping, their objection being confined to the short point—whether a province can be forced to a particular group against its will? Jinnah did not, however, feel re-assured by the Congress Working Committee's resolution. He stuck to his view that Pandit Nehru's statement, call it irresponsible if you like, represented the concealed intention of Gandhi and the Congress. He could not trust the Congress and he believed that the moment the British left the country, the Hindu-dominated Constituent Assembly would do away with the half-way house to Pakistan built by the Cabinet Mission by means of 'grouping' of the provinces.

Jinnah made an emphatic protest to His Majesty's Government. On July 18, Lord Pethwick Lawrence, the Secretary

of State for India, made the following statement in the House of Lords: (Transfer of Power by V. P. Menon, p. 282):

“Before I leave this matter of Constituent Assembly, I should perhaps say a few words regarding some recent reports from India as to the intentions of the parties in joining the Constituent Assembly. We saw both parties shortly before we left India and they said to us quite categorically that it was their intention to go into the Assembly with the object of making it work. But having agreed to the statement of May, 16, and the Constituent Assembly elected in accordance with that statement, they cannot, of course, go outside the terms of what has been agreed. To do so would not be fair to other parties who come in and it is on the basis of that agreed procedure that His Majesty's Government have said that they will accept the decisions of the Constituent Assembly.”

Jinnah did not feel consoled by the speeches made in the British Parliament. He said that it was no use looking to any other source for help or assistance, and he felt that there was no Tribunal from whom the Muslims could seek for any redress except the Muslim Nation itself, and to it he would go. He then called for a meeting of the Council of the Muslim League on the 28th July at Bombay. In that meeting he said that in his anxiety to come to a peaceful settlement with the Congress, he advised the League to accept the Cabinet Mission plan which was far short of his full-fledged demand of Pakistan. He did so because he was sincerely moved by a desire not to allow the situation to develop into bloodshed and civil war. He felt that after getting a Constituent Assembly elected under false pretences, the Congress was now attempting to cheat the League out of the rights that have been given to the Muslims by the ‘Grouping’ of the Muslim-majority areas under the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Jinnah concluded by saying that in view of the true intentions of the Congress as expressed in Nehru's speech, it was no longer possible to work in co-operation with the Congress, and that therefore the League had no alternative but to adhere

once more to the national goal of Pakistan. In a passionate voice he gave the marching call "we have learnt a bitter lesson—the bitterest, I think, so far. Now there is no room left for compromise. Let us march on to our cherished goal of a sovereign Pakistan." (Jinnah by Hector Bolitho, p. 165).

Resolutions were passed in the meeting withdrawing the acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and sanctioning 'Direct Action' for forcing the goal of Pakistan. 16th August was fixed as the Day for Direct Action. When these Resolutions were passed amidst acclamations and enthusiasm, Jinnah declared:

"What we have done to-day is the most historic act in our history. Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional methods and by constitutionalism. But now we are obliged and forced into this position. To-day we bid goodbye to constitutional methods... To-day, we have forged a pistol and are in a position to use it.....' (Transfer of Power, by V. P. Menon, p. 284).

Did Jinnah realise what he was doing on that day? All his past good acts for which we have given him perhaps more than due praise were obliterated by this criminal action of open encouragement of mob-violence. If he could have visualised the future, he could have seen that rivers of blood, both of Hindus and Muslims, would flow as a result of 'Direct Action.' The day the 'Direct Action' was started law and order disappeared from India.

Minor League leaders were not to be left behind in the use of violent language (Pyarelal, Vol. I, p. 252). Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan said to the *Associated Press* of America—"Direct Action means action against law, resort to non-constitutional methods." Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar said that the Muslims were not believers in Ahimsa. Khwaja Nazimuddin said: "... We are not restricted to non-violence. The Muslim population of Bengal knows very well what 'Direct Action' would mean and we need not bother to give them any lead."

The preparation now began for giving effect to the policy of 'Direct Action.' The preparations that were made in

Calcutta are described as follows at page 258 of Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase by Pyare Lal:

“Elaborate preparations were made in Calcutta for Direct Action in advance. As Minister-in-charge of the portfolio of Law and Order, Suhrawardy began transferring systematically Hindu Police Officers from key-posts. On the 16th August, twenty-two Police stations out of twenty-four in Calcutta were in charge of Muslim officers and the remaining two were controlled by Anglo-Indians. The 16th August was declared to be public holiday throughout the province by the Bengal Government in spite of the warnings and protests by the opposition in the Provincial Assembly. Regulation lathis, spears, hatchets, daggers and other lethal weapons including firearms were distributed in large numbers beforehand to the Muslims. Transport for League volunteers and Muslim hooligans was arranged. Rationing difficulties were overcome by issuing supplementary petrol coupons to the extent of several hundred gallons to the Ministers, and by the Chief Minister to himself, just before the Direct Action Day.”

“Direct Action programme reached its culmination in the Great Calcutta Killing on the 16th, 17th and 18th August. From the mid-night of the 15th August, organised bands of Muslims variously armed were seen moving about the streets rending the silence of the night by their militant cries and the slogans. The dawn of the 16th August broke on a cloudy and threatening sky but the rain held off till evening. Muslim hooligans got busy from early morning on the 16th.....

“The conflagration became general towards evening and pandemonium prevailed all over the city when the swelling, unruly mobs returning from the Maidan after the grand rally, presided over by Suhrawardy, began to interfere with those who did not join the hartal. Their shops were looted, and contents of the shop thrown into

the streets; private cars and trams were burnt; stray pedestrians were assaulted and stabbed."

General Sir Francis Tuke who was the General Officer Commanding the Calcutta area at the time has given a vivid description of the Great Calcutta Killing in his book 'While Memory Serves.'

"The Great Calcutta Killing began on Direct Action Day, August 16, a warm, sticky, familiar day in the monsoon, when big numbers of Muslims congregated to listen to the explanations of their leaders. Hindus and Muslims soon turned on each other with their vicious knives. The underworld of Calcutta was taking charge of the city..... The Market itself was strewn with bodies..... one room contained fifteen corpses and another twelve... we rescued two live children, both wounded and one already gangrenous. As might be expected, they were dazed and half-witted... Most of the dead in the Market had not had the remotest idea of what was happening and why....."

The description given in Pyare Lal's Last Phase, Vol. I, p. 255:

"The looting and killing went on for forty hours in some localities. The streets were strewn with dead bodies and the foul odour of the decayed and decaying corpses, which lay unattended for days, filled the air. Dead bodies had been pushed down the manholes with the result that the drains were choked. Dead bodies lay in heaps in the bye-lanes, providing a gruesome feast to street dogs, jackals and vultures; they were seen floating down the rivers; there were stories of children being hurled down from the roofs of the houses or burnt alive; of women being raped, mutilated and then killed."

An article of *the Statesman*, dated 20th August, 1946 said as follows:

"The origin of the appalling carnage and loss in the capital of a great Province—we believe the worst comi-

munal riot in India's history—was a political demonstration by the Muslim League... The bloody shambles to which this country's largest city has been reduced is an abounding disgrace, which, owing to the Bengal Ministry's pre-eminence as a League Ministry, has inevitably tarnished seriously the all-India reputation of the League itself."

Another article in *the Statesman*:

"What befell India's largest city last week was no mere communal riot, as we have hitherto understood the sanguinary term. For three days, the city concentrated on unrestrained civil war. Upon whom the main guilt for it rests is manifest. Where the primary blame lies is where we have squarely put it—upon the Provincial Muslim League Cabinet which carries responsibility for law and order in Bengal."

The Direct Action programme of the Muslim League did not produce the desired result in Calcutta, as there was considerable loss of life among the Muslims as well. The dock labourers in the port of Calcutta were mostly Eastern Bengal Mahommedans coming from Noakhali and other adjoining districts. A cry was raised in Noakhali by the League members there that "Calcutta must be avenged." In Noakhali, the Hindus were in a helpless minority and their lives and property were at the mercy of the lawless section of the Mussalmans. Murder and arson prevailed all around. The Calcutta *Statesman* of the 26th October commented—"Arson, looting, murder, abduction of women, forced conversions and forced marriages are everywhere." What incensed public opinion even more than the slaughter and carnage was the crimes perpetrated against women. The anger over these spread far beyond Bengal.

Happenings in Noakhali resulted in reprisals by the Hindus in several parts of India. The repercussions in Bihar were however dreadful. Several thousand Muslims were killed there. The Viceroy and Nehru came to Patna immediately and employed all the forces, civil and military, to control the situation. In this way normal situation was restored there within a week.

CHAPTER XXX

Battle Royal Over Interpretation of Grouping Clauses Gandhiji Succeeds in Sabotaging Cabinet Mission Plan (1946)

We may remember that the Cabinet Mission Plan propounded on the 16th May intended to give to the Muslims substance of Pakistan within the framework of a Federal India. The substance of Pakistan was to be given by means of 'Grouping' of the provinces in three sections—two Muslim-majority of the sections in the East and West and one Hindu-majority section in the middle. The section in which a particular province was to be grouped was also specified in the Statement of the Mission.

In view of the trouble that arose later on over the interpretation of the grouping clauses in the Cabinet Mission Plan, it is necessary to state the clauses here.

Para 19(5) of the Statement..... These sections shall proceed to settle provincial constitutions for the provinces included in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for these provinces and if so with what provincial subjects the group shall deal. *Provinces should have power to opt out of the groups in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (8) below;*

Para 19(8) of the same..... As soon as the new constitutional agreements have come into operation, *it shall be open to any province to elect to come out of any group in which it has been placed. Such a decision shall be taken by the legislature of the province after the first general election under the new Constituent Assembly.*

Another important paragraph in the Statement, namely, para 15(5), however, laid down that 'Provinces should be free to form groups with Executives and Legislatures.....'

On the next day, namely, 17th May, the Cabinet Mission held a Press Conference in which one Press correspondent asked the specific question that in view of para 15(5) of the State-

ment whether at the initial stage a province is free to stay out. The categorical answer of the Mission was as follows (Transfer of Power by V. P. Menon, Appendix VIII, p. 491):

"Provinces automatically come into sections A, B or C which are set out in the Statement, and initially they are in the particular sections to which they are elected in the Statement, and that particular section will decide whether a group shall be formed and what should be the constitution of the provinces in the section and the group. The right to opt out of the group formed by that section arises after the constitution has been framed and the first election to the Legislature has taken place under that constitution. It does not arise before that."

Gandhiji's reactions about 'Grouping' was given out in his prayer-speech of the evening of 19th May in which he said that the people must understand that the scheme was merely a recommendation and not an award, and hence it was open to the Constituent Assembly to vary the recommendations, reject them or improve upon them. He further elucidated his ideas on this subject in an article in the *Harijan* of the 26th May:

"After four days of searching examination of the State Paper issued by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government my conviction abides that it is the best document the British Government could have produced in the circumstances."

This is perfect so far. But what about the Units? Are the Sikhs, for whom the Punjab is the only home in India, to consider themselves against their will, as part of the Section which takes in Sind, Baluchistan and the Frontier Province? In my opinion, the voluntary character of the Statement demands that the liberty of the individual Unit should be unimpaired. Any member or Section is free to join it. The freedom to opt out is an additional safeguard. It can never be a substitute for the freedom retained in para 15 (5)."

Very soon fierce controversy arose over the Grouping Question. Congress Leaders of Assam objected to enter Group

C where Assam's partner would have been Bengal—a Muslim-majority province. According to Maulana Azad's autobiography, Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru were not at first much inclined to pay any attention to Assam's objections but the objectors soon found a formidable supporter in the person of Gandhiji himself who issued statement after statement supporting the standpoint which the Assam Congress Leaders had taken. Now the question of interpretation of the Statement of the Cabinet Mission, dated 16th May, 1946, on the point of 'Grouping' became of primary importance. The Congress asked for an interpretation from the Court. But both the Cabinet Mission and the Muslim League said that the Statement was a State Paper which is not required to be interpreted by a Court. In these circumstances, Mr. Attlee, aiming at reconciliation, invited both the parties to London for a conference. In response to the invitation, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, Nehru and Sardar Baldev Singh went there accompanied by Lord Wavell. But nothing came out of it. On December 6, the British Cabinet issued a statement which rejected the Congress interpretation of the disputed clauses about 'Grouping' in the Cabinet Mission Statement of the 16th May. It was also given out that in giving the interpretation, the British Cabinet had taken the opinion of its Law Officers.

Gandhiji's reactions on the British Government's interpretation of the Cabinet Mission's Plan are described below by Pyare Lal in his book, *Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase Vol. I*, p. 477:

"The British Government's decision of 6th December, raised a life and death issue for Assam and in a measure for North Western Frontier Province. If the Congress accepted the Mission's interpretation of the grouping clauses, Assam, where the Hindus and the Congress constituted the majority, would pass under the control of the Muslim League Government of Bengal which was wedded to Pakistan..... Should Assam immolate itself then so as not to block the progress of the rest of India?

"..... But Assam must not lose its soul. It should not join the Section. 'No one can force Assam to do what it does not want to do.' It should lodge its protest, retire from the Constituent Assembly, and frame its own constitution as an autonomous unit. 'Not only a Province but even a single individual can rebel against the Congress and by doing so serve it, assuming that the Province or the individual is in the right. I have done so myself. That would be a kind of Satyagraha against the Congress for the good of the Congress....."

What was the psychology behind Gandhiji's mind when he adopted such a stern attitude in support of the so-called refusal of Assam to go into the same group with Bengal. It should not be forgotten that Assam is a multi-racial and multi-lingual province, consisting of Assamese Hindus, well-educated hill-people, primitive aboriginals, and Bengali-speaking Hindus and Muslims. Of these, Bengali-speaking Hindus and Muslims who formed about one-third of the total population of Assam would certainly have preferred to go into the same group with Bengal; the preference of the Assamese-speaking Muslims would have been the same; hill-people and the aboriginals were indifferent in the matter. Only the Assamese-speaking Hindus led by Mr. Gopinath Bardoloi and his Congress Associates, who formed not more than twenty-five per cent of the total population of Assam, were not ready to go into the same group with Bengal. In view of the above facts, it must be said that Gandhiji's attitude on the question of grouping Assam with Bengal was, to say the least, altogether deplorable, and was fraught with the greatest possible danger. Language used by Gandhiji in giving out his reactions was also, very unhappy. Its worst feature was, however, that he openly incited the Assamese Congress-men to rebel against the Congress and to offer Satyagraha. He was ready to go to the farthest limit to sabotage the Cabinet Mission Plan of 'Grouping.'

In view of this attitude of Gandhiji, it is perhaps permissible to speculate on his psychology which prompted him to adopt it. Creation of Pakistan or a half-way house to Pakistan as envisaged in the Cabinet Mission Plan meant an

end of Gandhiji's dream of Gandhian hegemony in India. Therefore he prepared himself to give a last-ditch fight. Interpretation of grouping clauses involving Assam afforded him a suitable battle ground. He felt that through the Constituent Assembly he will be able to achieve his end and therefore he was not ready to budge an inch from his own interpretation of the grouping clauses. His adamant attitude in this respect was shown at the interview he and Nehru had with Wavell on the 27th August, 1946, after the latter's return from Calcutta. When the Great Calcutta Killing started on the 16th August, the 'Direct Action' day of the Muslim League, the casualty in the course of three days amounted over 6000 (six thousand) killed and over 30,000 (thirty thousand) maimed. Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah remained unconcerned over this catastrophe and did nothing else except issuing Press Statements. It was Lord Wavell alone who rushed to the spot.

What Lord Wavell saw at Calcutta appaled him. He felt that there were two alternative to prevent further blood-shed—one was to persuade the Congress and the League to come together and form a Coalition Government in the Centre and the other was a ruthless suppression of disorders by employing British troops. But he was very much loth to employ the second step, and decided to try the first alternative. With that end in view, he contacted Khwaja Nazimuddin, an influential League leader, who had the ear of Jinnah. Nazimuddin took a very reasonable attitude and said that he would try to persuade Jinnah towards the formation of a Coalition Ministry, if the Congress made an unequivocal declaration that it had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan with the Mission's interpretation. Khwaja Nazimuddin said that he only wanted that the Cabinet Mission Plan should not be left to the tender mercies of the Congress leaders but should have a fair chance of being worked in accordance with the declared intentions of the Mission itself. After returning from Calcutta, Lord Wavell called Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru for an interview on 27th August and placed before them the Nazimuddin proposal. Both the leaders categorically refused to give any declaration and said that they would stick to their own interpretation of

the plan. The 'Surrender-not' attitude of Gandhiji at this juncture stands in terrible contrast to the ideas he himself expressed in his 'Letter to Every Briton,' written during the dark days of the War, in which he asked the British people to surrender their beautiful homes and all their possessions to the German Nazis and Italian Fascists with a view to avoid further bloodshed.

An interesting account of the conversation which Lord Wavell had with the two leaders has been given in "The Last Days of the British Raj" by Leonard Mosley. The following is taken from the said book:

- Wavell: Give me the simple guarantee that you accept the Cabinet Mission Plan.
- Gandhiji: We have already said that we accept it but we are not prepared to guarantee that we accept it in the way that the Cabinet Mission set it out. We have our own interpretations of what they propose.
- Wavell: Even if those interpretation differ from what the Cabinet Mission intended?
- Gandhiji: But of course, in any case, what the Cabinet Mission Plan really means is not what the Cabinet Mission thinks but what the Interim Government (Pandit Nehru's Government) thinks it means.
- Wavell: Can't you see that the necessity of this moment is to satisfy the Muslim League that you are not trying to let them down? It is a moment—possibly the last we have—to bring the League and the Congress together. And all I ask is a guarantee. Will the Congress commit itself to a declaration, *a declaration which will satisfy the Muslim League and assure the continuation of a stable and unitary government?*

Wavell then reached into his drawer and pulled out a paper. 'This is what I have in mind.' The declaration ran thus: "The Congress are prepared in the interests of communal harmony to accept the intention of the Statement of

16th May (the Cabinet Mission statement) that provinces cannot exercise any option affecting their membership of the sections or of the groups if formed, until the decision contemplated in paragraph 19 (vii) of the Statement of 16th May is taken by the new legislature after the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections held.'

Gandhiji handed it over to Nehru, who read it through and said:

"To accept this is tantamount to asking Congress to put itself in fetters."

Wavell: So far as the Cabinet Mission Plan is concerned that is what I feel you should do. When the Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan in the first place, I cannot believe that you did so not knowing its implications. If so, why did you accept it at all? The plan to divide the country into groups was implicit. You cannot now turn round and say that you did not realise that is what was intended.

Gandhiji: What the Cabinet Mission intended and the way we interpret what they intended may not necessarily be the same.

Wavell: This is lawyer's talk. Talk to me in plain English. I am a simple soldier and you confuse me with those legalistic arguments.

Nehru: We cannot help it if we are lawyers.

Wavell: No, but you can talk to me like honest men who are interested in India's future and welfare. The Cabinet Mission made its intentions as clear as daylight. Surely we don't need to go to law about that or split legal hairs, either. As a plain man, the situation seems to me simple. If the Congress will give me the guarantee for which I ask, I think I can persuade Mr. Jinnah and the

Muslim League to reconsider their refusal to join the Interim Government. We need them in the Government; India needs them, and, if you are seriously concerned over the dangers of civil war—you must know as well as I that the danger is great—then you need them too. In the circumstances, I feel that it would be unwise, even perilous, if I allowed Congress to form an interim Government on its own.

Gandhiji: But you have already announced that the Government will come into being. You cannot go back on your word now.

Wavell: The situation has changed. As a result of the Killing in Calcutta, India is on the verge of civil war. It is my duty to prevent it. I will not prevent it if I allow the Congress to form a Government which excludes the Muslims; they will then decide that Direct Action is the only way, and we shall have the massacre of Bengal all over again.

Nehru: In other words, you are willing to surrender to the Muslim League's blackmail.

Wavell: (with great heat) For God's sake, man, who are you to talk of blackmail?

After the Wavell-Gandhi-Nehru meeting of the 27th August, course of events took a new turn. That very night Gandhiji sent a telegram to Mr. Attlee in England that the Calcutta Killing has unnerved the Viceroy and he required an abler and legal mind to assist him. This telegram had some effect on Mr. Attlee and henceforth he was in search of a suitable man to replace Lord Wavell.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Interim Government is Formed and the War of Succession Begins

Lord Wavell is Dismissed (1946-47)

What happened at the Wavell-Gandhi-Nehru interview of the 27th August convinced Wavell that no Interim Government should be formed until the Congress and the League agreed to form a Coalition Government. Mr. Attlee, however, did not agree with him and wanted an Interim Government immediately. Lord Wavell then proceeded towards the formation of a Coalition Interim Government at the Centre. Jinnah was at his old game again and demanded on behalf of the League the right to nominate all the Muslim members of the Cabinet. Congress refused to yield. In these circumstances, Lord Wavell reluctantly formed an Interim Government without the League. In this Government, Pandit Nehru occupied the position of the Vice-President. Later on, the Muslim League changed its mind and expressed a desire to enter the Government. In his letter, dated 13th October, 1946, Jinnah made it clear that the League had decided to join the Government because it felt that it would be fatal to the interests of the Muslims to leave the entire field of administration in the hands of the Congress. After entering the Government, the League, however, adopted a very obtuse attitude. Though Pandit Nehru as the Vice-President of the Council practically occupied the position as *de facto* Prime Minister, the League members were not prepared to recognise him as such. Liaquat Ali said that Interim Government consisted of two blocks under two different leaders. According to the Leaguers, the Constitution gave no special position of pre-eminence to the Vice-President beyond that of presiding over meetings of the Council when the Viceroy was absent. They ridiculed the idea of joint Cabinet responsibility. Jinnah said in a caustic vein: 'If Nehru can only come down to earth and think coolly and calmly, he must understand that he is neither the Prime Minister nor is it a Nehru Government;

he is only the member for External affairs and Commonwealth Department.' When Nehru insisted on calling the Government a Cabinet instead of Viceroy's Executive Council, Jinnah remarked sarcastically: 'Little things please little minds and you cannot turn a donkey into an elephant by calling it an elephant.' In such circumstances, the Coalition Ministry was doomed from the very beginning. The Council-Chamber now became the battle ground of the War of Succession. Within a week of his entry into the Interim Government, Ghaznafar Ali Khan made fiery speech to the students of Lahore. He said:

"We are going to the Interim Government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan. The Interim Government is one of the fronts of the 'Direct Action' Campaign (p. 283, Last Phase by Pyarelal.)"

Ispahani, who called himself a personal envoy of Jinnah in America made a broadcast there:

"The League has come into the Government.... principally to retrieve the machinery of Government, at least partially, from the monopolist control of its political opponents. The League's participation in the new Government..... only means that the struggle for Pakistan will now be carried on within as well as without the Government. (p. 289, Last Phase by Pyarelal)."

There was also a complaint from the Congress side, that as part of the 'Direct Action' within the Government, the Muslims were put in all key positions in the Departments under the Muslim League Members.

In the meantime, another crisis arose. The Finance Minister, Liaquat Ali had framed his budget which imposed heavy taxation on those who had business income of more than one lakh of rupees. He made a further proposal to appoint an Incometax Investigation Commission to enquire into the allegations about the evasion of taxes on the huge profits made by the businessmen and industrialists out of war-contracts. Liaquat Ali explained that his budget and other proposals had been based on the principles declared by responsible Congress-

men, particularly by the head of the Congress, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Unfortunately these tax-evaders happened to be the main patrons and financiers of the Congress. The right wing of the Congress led by Sardar Patel and Mr. Rajagopalachariar violently opposed these budget proposals. They said that these proposals were based on communal considerations and were intended to harm the Hindu capitalists. They would not hear the argument that these proposals were in full conformity with the declared Congress objectives.

In this way crisis after crisis was brewing in the Cabinet itself. In the meanwhile on the 29th January, 1947, the Council of the League passed a militant resolution at its Karachi session. That resolution called upon the British Government to declare that the plan of May 16th had failed and also demanded that the Constituent Assembly should be dissolved forthwith. Thereupon nine members of the Interim Government, including the members of the minority community, pointed out to Lord Wavell that the resolution of the Muslim League was not merely for dissolution of the Constituent Assembly but for total rejection of the Cabinet Mission scheme and that there was also refusal to withdraw the 'Direct Action' resolution of 1946. In these circumstances, they pointed out, the continuation of the Muslim League members in the Interim Government could serve no useful purpose. Nehru and Sardar Patel declared that if the League members were allowed to continue in the Cabinet, Congress members would resign. The League must leave the Government if they did not rescind the Karachi resolution. Lord Wavell was thus placed in a very unenviable position. Owing to the fact that the Central Government was a house divided against itself, the communal atmosphere as well as the law and order situation became alarming. It seemed that India was on the verge of a civil war. Scene now changes to Whitehall, London.

LORD WAVELL IS DISMISSED

The British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, became very much concerned with the progressive deterioration of the situation in India and he was determined to take drastic steps to end the suspense. On 20th February, 1947, he made an epoch-making statement in the floor of the House of Commons and declared the intention of the British Government unequivocally. By this statement the British Government announced its 'definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect transfer of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948.' Paragraph 10 of the said statement was very significant and it ran as follows:

"After months of hard work by the Cabinet Mission, a great measure of agreement was obtained as to the method by which a constitution should be worked out. This was embodied in their statements of May last. His Majesty's Government there agreed to recommend to Parliament a constitution worked out in accordance with the proposals made therein by a fully representative Constituent Assembly. But if it should appear that such a constitution will not have been worked out by a fully representative Assembly before the time mentioned..... His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people."

After making the aforesaid statement of high policy, Mr. Attlee announced in the House that Lord Wavell's 'war-time appointment' would be terminated and in his place Admiral Lord Mountbatten would be appointed as Viceroy in order to effect the transfer of power.

This is perhaps the proper place to have a general review of the Viceroyalty of Lord Wavell. Maulana Azad, in his capacity as the President of the Congress, came into personal contact with him. His tribute to Lord Wavell was as follows:

“ I found him a rugged, straightforward soldier void of verbiage, and direct both in approach and statement. He was not devious like the politician but came straight to the point and created in the mind an impression of great sincerity which touched my heart. After the failure of the Cripp's Mission, Churchill Government had made up their mind to put the Indian question in cold storage for the duration of the war... To Lord Wavell must belong the credit for opening the closed door... The result was the Simla Conference...”

Lord Wavell assumed his high office on the 18th October, 1943. At that very moment there occurred a terrible famine in Bengal. There was no natural cause for the occurrence neither there was any scarcity of foodstuff in the country. An acute famine in the fertile land of Bengal with its net-work of railways and steamers on all sides is unthinkable, but nevertheless, there was a famine—a man-made famine caused by rapacious rice-traders who hoarded and held back rice from the market. Through the incompetency of the Muslim League Government of Bengal and the rapacity of the rice-traders three millions of people died of starvation. The communal politics of the Muslim League Ministry also played its due part in this catastrophe. The Calcutta '*Statesman*' did a great service to the people by publishing photographs of people, dead and dying, in the streets of Calcutta. When Lord Wavell came to know about the terrible condition there, he immediately rushed to Calcutta on the 24th October and forthwith ordered that all army-foodstocks must be made available to the famine-stricken people, and priority must be given by the railways to the movement of food-stock towards Bengal. Bengal can never forget the services rendered to her by Lord Wavell in her great distress.

He must also be given great credit for his indefatigable efforts to avoid partition of the country. As we have said before, he used to say—'You cannot alter geography..... India

is a natural unit.' 'As a student of war, he believed that partition would dangerously weaken India's defence and lay her open to attack from Russia in the north and China in the east. And, as a soldier, he realised that partition would mean break-up of that magnificent instrument of war and defence, the Indian Army.' (Last days of British Raj, by L. Mosley, p. 18).

Lord Wavell felt sure that the quarrel between the Congress and the League would ultimately lead to a division of India. Wavell, the Soldier, could never think of future India in terms of Partition and so he was anxious to bring the two opposite sides together in some sort of government, 'so that they may fight out their difference in the debating chamber rather than the back alleys.' Wavell pointed out that if the present state of affairs continue there would be further massacres which could be prevented only by the use of British troops—a step which he was desperately anxious to avoid. Gandhiji's reply was—'If the Viceroy was really worried about having to use British forces to preserve order..... the solution was simple. Withdraw them. Leave the matter of keeping the peace to the Congress.' Wavell felt exasperated. 'To suggest that the British should withdraw their armies at this moment, when Hindu-Muslim relations were wider apart than ever before, was a counsel no Viceroy could possibly have accepted.'

It is funny to note that while Congress called Wavell pro-Muslim, Jinnah sarcastically called him 'the latest exponent of geographical unity.' Lord Wavell once lamented that it has always been his lot 'to get the dirty end of the stick.'

L. Mosley, in his Last Days of the British Raj at p. 50, says—

"Wavell became firmer than ever in one thing; that though the problems of India's political future now seemed insuperable, he himself would never be responsible for splitting the land, its people, its Army into two."

With the Great Calcutta Killing of August, 1946, before his mind, towards the end of the year he drew up a plan of his own for the gradual withdrawal of the British Power from India, province by province. He believed that precipitate withdrawal would bring in chaos, anarchy in the country and would cause

much bloodshed. He also felt that his plan would, at least, have the merit of avoiding the partition of India. Mr. Attlee did not like this plan and called it a plan of military retreat. One may differ about the practicability of his scheme but no one can doubt about the sincerity of purpose lying behind it. His insistence on Gandhiji to accept the Cabinet Mission's own interpretation of the 'Grouping clauses' in its plan, in their interview of the 27th August, 1946, was due to his desire to avoid partition and possibility of any large scale massacre.

But at the same time it must be admitted that he was a square peg in a round hole. Situation in India at the time was extremely difficult and delicate and it required handling by a politician and diplomat rather than by a soldier. Wavell's great drawback was that he was not cast for the role of a diplomat. From that point of view Mr. Attlee was undoubtedly right in replacing him. For the role of the last Viceroy in India, Lord Mountbatten was eminently fitted as with his soldierly qualities he combined those of a first rate politician and diplomat.

Lord Wavell did not live long after relinquishing the Viceroyalty of India. It was the characteristic of the man that he took upon his own shoulders all the blames for the failure of the Simla Conference, though it was well-known that the cause for the failure lay elsewhere. He was not a politician but a straight soldier. By nature, he was silent and taciturn. He never explained, never defended himself. History requires, Justice requires that due tributes should be paid to this Great Soldier who tried his utmost up to the last to maintain the fundamental Unity of India.

CHAPTER XXXII

Lord Mountbatten Arrives Nehru and Patel Transfer Allegiance to Mountbatten Eclipse of Gandhiji as a Political Force India is Partitioned

Lord Mountbatten was specially selected to be the last Viceroy of India. For this selection, Attlee alone was responsible. In this connection, King's diary of the 17th December, 1946, is very interesting:

“Attlee told me that Lord Wavell's plan for our leaving India savours too much of a military retreat and does not realise it is a political problem and not a military one. Wavell has done very good work up to now but Attlee doubts whether he has the finesse to negotiate the next step when we must keep the two Indian parties friendly to us all the time.”

Poor Lord Wavell was a straight soldier but no politician. By nature, he was a silent man. When he had occasion to talk, he talked straight and expected straight answers. He disliked Gandhiji and his legalistic quibbles. His complaint against Gandhiji was that he could never pin him down to straightforward statement of fact and intention. At the end of an interview with Gandhiji, Wavell said. “He spoke to me for half an hour and I am not still sure what he meant to tell me. Every sentence he spoke could be interpreted in at least two different ways.” ‘There came a time when the prospect of another talk with Gandhiji filled him with so much mental discomfort that he could not sleep the night before.’ (The Last Phase of the British Raj, by L. Mosley, p. 19).

This drawback in the temperament of Lord Wavell was one of the reasons why Mr. Attlee was anxious to replace him immediately. According to him, the need of the hour was how to establish close personal contact with the Indian Leaders. “Mr. Attlee had chosen Lord Mountbatten as the new Viceroy because

he was an extremely lively, exciting personality. He had an extraordinary faculty for getting on with all kinds of people, as he had shown when he was Supreme in South East Asia. He was also blessed with a very unusual wife." Lord Mountbatten was given specific directions to establish closest personal contact with the Indian leaders.

Lord Mountbatten arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947 and was installed as Viceroy on the 24th. He was accompanied by a formidable personal staff in the persons of Lord Ismay and Sir Eric Mievile who had considerable Indian experience. There were four other members of the staff among whom was Alan Campbell-Johnson who was in charge of Press and Public Relations affairs.

Mountbatten was so keen to establish personal contact with the Indian leaders that he wrote to Gandhiji, Jinnah and Nehru to come and see him even before he was sworn in as Viceroy. Lord Ismay was given the difficult job of selling the good intentions of the Viceroy among the Muslim League leaders while his wife and daughter Pamela were also given specific assignments to breathe friendship and goodwill to everyone. How successful Lady Mountbatten and Pamela were in their assigned tasks will be apparent from the heart-felt tribute paid to them by Pandit Nehru at the time of their departure from India. About Lady Mountbatten Nehru said—"Wherever you have gone, you have brought solace, you have brought hope and encouragement. Is it surprising therefore that the people of India should love you and look up to you as one of themselves and should grieve that you are going?" About young Pamela Mountbatten he said—"... 'who, coming straight from school, and possessing all the charm she does, did grown-up person's work in this troubled scene of India.'

Charm of Mountbatten was shown by his first interview with Pandit Nehru. At the end of the interview, Mountbatten said: "Mr. Nehru, I want you to regard me not as the last Viceroy winding up the British Raj, but as the first to lead the way to the new India." Nehru, who had already come under the spell of Mountbatten replied: "Now I know what they mean when they speak of your charm being so dangerous."

Sardar Patel was extremely bitter after his experience of working with the Muslim League Members inside the Cabinet. He was now ready to accept any drastic step which Lord Mountbatten would undertake. So there was no difficulty on the part of Mountbatten to tackle the Sardar who was ready to accept the partition if thereby he could get rid of the League.

So at once, Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel became Mountbatten's men. From this moment began the decline of Gandhian influence in Indian politics.

Even before Lord Mountbatten had arrived in India Sardar Patel had made up his mind in favour of Partition. A few month's experience of working in the same Cabinet with the Muslim League members was sufficient to convince him that it was impossible to work with them. By the middle of February, 1947, in a Press interview, he declared that the Congress would withdraw from the interim Government if the representatives of the Muslim League were allowed to remain in it. Therefore, it is no wonder that at his first interview with Mountbatten he made it clear that, if necessary, he was ready for a ruthless surgical operation, if thereby the Muslim League could be got rid of. The line into which Sardar Patel's mind was working will be apparent from a letter written by him to Kanji Dwarkadas on 4th March, 1947 (Last Phase by Pyarelal, Vol. II, p. 83):

"If the League insists on Pakistan, the only alternative is the division of the Punjab and Bengal. They cannot have the Punjab as a whole or Bengal..... I do not think that the British Government will agree to division. In the end, they will see the wisdom of handing over the reins of government to the strongest party. Even if they do not... a strong Centre with the whole of India—except Eastern Bengal and a part of the Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan—enjoying full autonomy under the Centre will be so powerful that the remaining portions will eventually come in."

Later on, in several speeches, Sardar Patel explained how he was converted to the idea of partition. In the Interim Cabinet he was holding the charge of States Ministry, he found that the

officers of the Political Department were working in a manner wholly injurious to the interests of India. Describing his experience in the States Ministry, he said (Last Phase by Pyarelal, Vol. II, p. 153):

“It was then that I was made fully conscious of the extent to which our interests were being prejudiced in every way by the machinations of the Political Department, and came to the conclusion that the sooner we were rid of these, the better for us. I came to the conclusion that the best course was to hasten the departure of these foreigners even at the cost of the partition of the country. It was also then that I felt that there was one way to make the country safe and strong, and that was the unification of the rest of India.”

In this connection, the following passage from Maulana Azad's book “India Wins Freedom” is very relevant (pp. 187-188):

“Patel openly said that there was no way out except partition. Experience had shown that it was impossible to work with the Muslim League. Another consideration probably weighed with Sardar Patel. Lord Mountbatten had argued that the Congress had agreed to a weak centre only in order to meet the objection of the League. Provinces were therefore given full provincial autonomy, but in a country so divided by language, community and culture, a weak centre was bound to encourage fissiparous tendencies. If the Muslim League were not there, we could plan for a strong Central Government and frame a constitution desirable from the point of view of Indian unity. Lord Mountbatten advised that it would be better to give up a few small pieces in the north-west and the north-east and then build up a strong and consolidated India. Sardar Patel was impressed by the argument that co-operation with the Muslim League would jeopardise Indian unity and strength.”

Much against his will, Jawaharlal also came to favour partition under forces of circumstances. Maulana Azad has also

thrown much light as to the working of Jawaharlal's mind. In the same book (p. 185) Maulana Azad says as follows:

Jawaharlal..... "did not speak in favour of partition in the way Patel did. In fact, he admitted that partition was by nature wrong. He had however lost all hopes of joint action after his experience of the conduct of the League members of the Executive Council..... They could not see eye to eye on any question. Every day they quarrelled. Jawaharlal asked me in despair what other alternative there was to accepting partition. Jawaharlal spoke to me in sorrow but left no doubt in my mind as to how his mind was working. It was clear that in spite of his repugnance to the idea of partition, he was coming to the conclusion day by day that there was no other alternative. He recognised that partition was an evil but he held that circumstances were inevitably leading in that direction."

When Mountbatten arrived in India, Gandhiji was at Patna in the province of Bihar. On receipt of an invitation from the new Viceroy, Gandhiji arrived at Delhi on 31st March. Immediately on his arrival Maulana Azad went to see him. How gradually Gandhiji changed his attitude with respect to partition is described below in the words of Maulana Azad as stated in his book 'India Wins Freedom' (pp. 186-187):

"We expected that he would come to Delhi to meet Lord Mountbatten and he actually arrived on 31st March. I went to see him at once and his very first remark was— 'Partition has now become a threat. It seems Vallabhbhai and even Jawaharlal have surrendered. What will you do now? Will you stand by me or have you also changed? "

"I replied—'I have been and am against partition. Never has my opposition to partition been so strong as today. I am, however distressed to find that even Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel have accepted defeat and in your words, surrendered their arms. My only hope now is in you. If you stand against partition, we may yet save the situation. If you however acquiesce, I am afraid India is lost.'

'Gandhiji said, 'What a question to ask? If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive, I will never agree to the partition of India. Nor will I, if I can help it, allow Congress to accept it.'

"Later that day Gandhiji met Lord Mountbatten. He saw him again the next day and still again on 2nd April. Sardar Patel came to him soon after he returned from his first meeting with Lord Mountbatten, and was closeted with him for over two hours. What happened during this meeting I do not know. But when I met Gandhiji again, I received the greatest shock of my life, for I found that he too had changed. He was still not openly in favour of partition but he no longer spoke so vehemently against it. What surprised and shocked me even more was that he began to repeat the arguments which Sardar Patel had already used. For over two hours I pleaded with him but could make no impression on him."

"In despondency I said at last, 'If even you have now adopted these views, I see no hope of saving India from catastrophe.'"

The first interview between Gandhiji and Lord Mountbatten took place in the afternoon of 31st March, 1947. Gandhiji returned from the meeting greatly impressed by the sincerity, gentlemanliness and nobility of character of the Viceroy. Another interview took place on the next day. At the end of the second day's conversation, Gandhiji placed before the Viceroy his solution of the deadlock, namely, the invitation to Mr. Jinnah by the Viceroy to form a Government. The Viceroy said that solution proposed by him seemed to be attractive and suggested to Gandhiji that he should discuss his plan with Ismay. The Viceroy's staff, headed by Ismay, did not however at all like the idea. They dubbed it 'an old kite flown without disguise.' Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel also did not like the idea of Gandhiji. Thereafter Gandhiji returned to Patna, after writing a very interesting letter to Lord Mountbatten:

"I had several short talks with Pandit Nehru and others and an hour's talk with him alone; and then with several members of the Working Committee..... I am sorry to say that I had failed to carry any of them with me..... except Badshah Khan..... Thus I have to ask you to omit me from your consideration. Congressmen who are in the interim Government are stalwarts, seasoned servants of the nation, and therefore as far as the Congress point of view is concerned, they will be complete advisers..... In the circumstances mentioned above, subject to your consent, I propose, if possible, to leave tomorrow for Patna."

Henceforth for all practical purposes, Gandhiji was eliminated from all negotiations about the Indian Independence and the duumvirate of Nehru and Patel began. They now hitched their wagon to Lord Mountbatten's star.

At the time when Lord Mountbatten arrived, the condition of the country was chaotic. His Chief of Staff, Lord Ismay, has described the situation in the following words (at pp. 417-18 in his Memoirs):

"I had thought before I left England that a period of fifteen months was far too short a time in which to complete arrangements for the transfer of power. But I had not been three weeks in India before I was convinced that so far from being too short, it was too long. The principal reason for this change of mind was the realisation that communal bitterness had grown to incredible proportion since I was last in India.

"A second reason for my conviction that we could not continue to bear responsibility until June, 1948, was that the administration of the country was going to the dogs. Up to 1946, the Viceroy had looked for advice to an Executive Council of wise, experienced men, both British and Indian. But this has now ceased to exist, and in its place there had been set up the Interim Coalition Government, over which the Viceroy presided with Mr

Nehru as Deputy Prime Minister. Nine of the members belonged to the Congress Party and five to the Muslim League. The latter was always referred to by Mr. Jinnah as 'sentinels' looking after Moslem interests. I doubt whether there has even been a coalition whose members were so determined not to co-operate with each other. The only point on which there was agreement was that the British should quit India as soon as possible. Every other problem was regarded exclusively from communal angle. Whenever, for example, there was a vacancy for an appointment, the Minister-in-charge of the Department concerned unashamedly nominated one of his own co-religionists to fill it, irrespective of his qualifications for the post."

The position being as described above, Lord Mountbatten came to the conclusion that steps for transfer of power should be taken immediately. As regards the Cabinet Mission Plan, he felt that it had already collapsed even before his arrival in India and attempt to resurrect it was useless. So he formulated a fresh plan of his own, under which power was to be transferred to the provinces or to such consolidation of provinces as the latter might decide to form. On the 2nd May, he sent his plan to London with Lord Ismay and Mr. George Abell. Thereafter he went to Simla for a short rest.

Next week, Lord Mountbatten had with him as his guests at Simla—Pandit Nehru, Mr. Krishna Menon and Mr. V. P. Menon. Here he showed his plan to Pandit Nehru whose reactions were rather violent. Pandit Nehru pointed out to Mountbatten that his plan would Balkanise India and the Congress would never accept it. At this stage Mr. V. P. Menon took the field and suggested to the Viceroy that perhaps both the Congress and the League would be prepared to accept Dominion Status, if by so doing power could be transferred at a much earlier date than June, 1948. Some people say it was Mr. Krishna Menon whose brain conceived this idea first. Whatever the true facts may be, Mr. V. P. Menon gave a shape to a new plan which envisaged the partition of India and creation of two new Dominions, India and Pakistan. Pandit Nehru approved of it immediately.

and, later on, consent of Jinnah was also taken. With this new Plan, Lord Mountbatten started for London, accompanied by V. P. Menon. Lord Mountbatten arrived in London on May, 19. The break-neck speed with which matter was dealt with in London is described by Lord Ismay as follows in his Memoirs (pp. 421-22):

"We attended a meeting of the Indo-Burma Committee (of the Cabinet) that same afternoon. The Committee found no difficulty in approving the latest version of the plan without the alteration of a comma, and Mountbatten then turned to the question of the Dominion Status. He was confident that Congress would agree to it, and was fairly sure that the Muslim League would do likewise, provided that it would result in a considerably earlier transfer of power. The crux of the matter was the speed with which the necessary legislation could be drafted and passed through Parliament. Could this be done in a matter of weeks? The problem was referred to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Jowitt, and the Law Officers of the Crown. Lord Jowitt reported to the Committee the next day that an amending Bill to the 1935 Act could, by supreme efforts, be prepared within six or seven weeks once a final decision had been taken on exactly what was required..... The Prime Minister took the leaders of the Opposition into his confidence, and Mr. Churchill stated on behalf of the Tories that if there were an effective acceptance of the plan by both Congress and the Muslim League, they would do all in their power to expedite the passage of the necessary legislation. Thanks to the whole hearted support from all parties in England, Mountbatten got all that he needed, and he proposed that 15th August should be the appointed day for the transfer of power. The Cabinet agreed."

After getting full and complete consent of the British Cabinet in favour of his plan and after making all preliminary arrangements for the Parliamentary sanction and necessary legislation for the execution of the plan within a short space of twelve days, Mountbatten returned to India on the 31st May. Now there were to be no more consultation, discussion or con-

ference over the Plan which was now given an irrevocable form and had only to be announced formally.

During this period of absence of Lord Mountbatten from India, Jinnah made a fantastic demand of a eight-hundred mile corridor to link West and East Pakistan. This demand was carefully timed and was well-advertised in the Press of the West and was intended to exert maximum pressure on London to exact favourable terms for Pakistan in the belief that the British people would go to any length to give him a mighty Pakistan. *DAWN*, the leading Muslim League paper of India wrote:

"If Pakistan is to be real and strong, the creation of a corridor linking up its Eastern and Northern areas is an indispensable adjunct. Be that as it may, we have no doubt, however, that if Muslims can win Pakistan—as indeed they have already won it—they can just as well build a corridor somewhere for the linking up of the two segments of Pakistan."

This demand had, however, an effect in England opposite to what Jinnah intended, Mountbatten became careful and armed himself with a letter from Churchill to Jinnah intimating to the latter that such fantastic demand would, on the other hand, prevent the creation of Pakistan. Thereafter, nothing more was heard about it.

Alan Campbell-Johnson writes:

"Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, the two big Congressmen in the Interim Government, accept partition on the understanding that by conceding Pakistan to Jinnah they will have no more of him and eliminate his nuisance value, or, as Nehru put it privately, that by cutting off the head we shall get rid of headache." (p. 98 Mission with Mountbatten).

The Partition plan was formally presented to the Indian leaders in a conference held at the Viceroy's House on the 2nd June. The Congress and the League accepted the plan without much equivocation. Consent for a 'truncated and

moth-eaten Pakistan' was also virtually wrung out from Jinnah. Then came the Mahatma.

What happened at this momentous Mountbatten-Gandhi interview is described by Alan Campbell-Johnson as follows: (at p. 101, Mission with Mountbatten).

"Then at 12-30, the Mahatma arrived. In one sense he has been present throughout the whole proceedings, and uncertainty as to his ultimate reaction to the formal presentation of a Partition Plan undoubtedly had an inhibiting effect on the Congress leaders earlier in the morning. They were only too well aware of Gandhi's unpredictable response to the promptings of his inner voice. There have been widespread fears that he will at the bidding of his complex conscience go to extreme lengths: to wreck the Plan in one final effort to prevent the vivisection of India. Mountbatten faced this interview with considerable trepidation. Imagine his amazement and relief when the Mahatma blandly indicated on the backs of various used envelopes and other scraps of paper that he was observing a day of silence.

"When the interview was over, Mountbatten picked up the various bits of paper, which he thinks will be among his more historic relics. On them the Mahatma had written: 'I am sorry, I can't speak; when I took the decision about the Monday silence I did make two exceptions *i.e.*, about speaking to high functionaries on urgent matters or attending upon sick people. But I know you don't want me to break my silence. Have I said one word against you during my speeches? If you admit that I have not, your warning is superfluous. There are one or two things I must talk about, but not today. But if we meet each other again I shall speak."

As stated above Gandhiji did not raise any protest, either by word or sign, against the acceptance of the partition plan by the Congress leaders during his meeting with Mountbatten on 2nd June. But next day there were indications that Gandhiji was in a rebellious mood. In the 3rd evening, just before the

Viceroy and the leaders were due to broadcast, Gandhiji made a highly critical comment on the Mountbatten plan of partition and singled out Nehru as his target of attack. After referring to him as our 'King,' he commented: (p. 110, *Mission with Mountbatten* by Campbell-Johnson).

"We should not be impressed by everything the King does or does not do. If he has devised something good for us, we should praise him. If he has not, then we shall say so."

Mountbatten was somewhat perturbed when he heard the report of the speech Gandhiji made at the Prayer meeting. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali also complained that Gandhiji was making disturbing statements in his Prayer meetings and was inciting people to do as they liked and look to other leaders than those who accepted partition. Mountbatten calmly thought over the matter and what steps he took is described by Alan Campbell-Johnson as follows (Do, p. 110):

"Mountbatten wisely decided that the time had come to clear the air with Gandhi and to prevent his apparent misgivings taking firmer and more dangerous shape. So just before the Prayer Meeting he invited him to come round to Viceroy's House. Gandhi was clearly in a state of some distress, feeling under the first impact of the Plan that his life-long efforts for the unity of the Hindus and the Muslims had fallen about him. But, Mountbatten summoning all his powers of persuasion, urged him to consider the announcement not as a Mountbatten but as a Gandhi Plan; in all sincerity he had tried to incorporate Gandhi's major concepts of non-coercion, self-determination, the earliest possible date of British departure, and even his sympathetic views about Dominion Status."

Pyarelal describes Mountbatten-Gandhi meeting in the following words (*Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 217):

"The Viceroy sent for Gandhiji on the 4th June, and was at pains to explain to him why the partition plan did not merit his opposition. He put his case with a

skill, persuasiveness and flair for salesmanship, which the author of 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' might well have envied."

From Viceroy's House, Gandhiji went directly to the Prayer-meeting.. How Mountbatten succeeded in completely winning over Gandhiji is described by Alan Campbell-Johnson in the following words:

"Once again Mountbatten carried the day; just how decisively can be seen by what Gandhi said to-night. 'The British Government is not responsible for Partition,' he told the Prayer Meeting! 'The Viceroy has no hand in it. In fact, he is as opposed to division as Congress itself, but if both of us—Hindus and Moslems—cannot agree on anything else, then the Viceroy is left with no choice.'" (Mission with Mountbatten p. 110.)

It seems that he could be portrayed now as the setting Sun, shorn of all dazzling light, a feeble, ineffective, frustrated and neglected old man, very different from the dynamic, powerful and vigorous personality we have seen before.

According to Tendulkar (Vol. 8, p. 4), what Gandhiji said at the Prayer-meeting was as follows:

"He could not blame Lord Mountbatten for what had happened. It was the Act of the Congress and the Muslim League. The Viceroy had openly declared that he wanted a unified India but he was powerless in face of the Congress acceptance, however reluctantly, of the Muslim position."

To a correspondent Gandhiji said (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 244):

"Probably no one is more distressed than I am over the impending division of India. But I have no desire to launch any struggle against what promises to be an accomplished fact... Nor can I endorse your attack upon the British. They have not in any way promoted or encouraged this step."

Lord Wavell who tried his level best to keep the geographical unity of India was disgraced and dismissed summarily

for his efforts. Sir Cyril Radcliffe who was appointed to divide the Punjab saw the folly of the division of its great Irrigation system as the sources of the rivers which supplied the water were all in the East while the lands which were irrigated were in the West. When Sir Cyril pointed out the harms that would ensue to the Irrigation system by the division of the Punjab, he was told by the leaders of the Congress and the League not to indulge in politics but to mind his own business and to get on with his task of dividing Punjab. Neither the Indian leaders nor the Sikh leaders had the vision to foresee the disastrous results that would ensue after the division of the Irrigation system. When ultimately the line of division between the two Punjabs was announced on the 17th August, it was found that most of the canal systems which the Sikhs have financed and built, together with their fertile wheatlands have gone to Pakistan. Arson, loot, rape and murder started on a scale which was unprecedented in history.

The All India Congress Committee met at Bombay on the 14th June, 1947. At the meeting, Gandhiji told the members that they would be ill-advised to oppose the Working Committee's resolution on partition. He added: "The members must remember that the Working Committee, as their representative, had accepted the Plan (Mountbatten Plan) and it was their duty to stand by the Working Committee. His own views are well-known" (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 251). To those who were in a rebellious mood against the Working Committee's acceptance of Partition, Gandhiji said: "I have not got the strength today or else I would declare rebellion single-handed." Pandit Nehru's speech at the meeting showed weariness and a tired feeling but Sardar Patel made a frank and vigorous speech in which he explained why he could not fully follow the Gandhian line any longer. "The concluding portion of the Sardar's speech laid bare the root of difference that in the crucial hour had made the Congress High Command part company with Gandhiji. Freedom was coming, he said. They must build up industries. They must build up the Army and make it efficient and strong" (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 255). In the end, Gandhiji was left

without any friend or follower in the Working Committee. "Even Dr. Rajendra Prasad, whose loyalty to Gandhiji was unsurpassed, found himself unable to go all the way with him. "If there is to be a division of India,' he declared in a Press interview, 'then it should be as thorough as possible, including the division of Punjab and Bengal, so that there might not be left any room for contention or conflict.' And again: 'If that requires division of armed forces, that should also be brought about, and the sooner the better.'" (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 165). Thus unceremonious burial was given to the cult of Ahimsa and Non-violence of Gandhiji by his trusted lieutenants, Sardar Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Gandhiji's position at this time is described by Pyarelal in the following words (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 33):

"The impossible old man was put on the pedestal, admired for his genius and unerring hunch, consulted, listened to with respectful attention and bypassed."

As a matter of fact, Gandhiji had no longer his old influence on the Congress leaders. His influence on them began to wane after the dismal failure of his 'Quit India' movement which he started against their advice. Pyarelal, the author of 'Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase,' at p. 32 of his book (Vol. II) says: "It was well-known that some of the tallest in the Congress had actually cried 'Never again' during their last detention in 1942, when the full brunt of Government repression had descended upon the Congress organisation..." His influence further declined when Nehru, Patel and other top leaders entered the Interim Government in 1946. Formerly, Gandhiji's word was law to them. "But, after the formation of the Interim Government at the centre in September, 1946, the picture changed," Gandhiji himself felt that his immediate lieutenants on whom he had so long relied were no longer fully loyal to him. He bemoaned that—"His Old Guards functioning in a different milieu, surrounded by different faces and working through different instruments had come to think differently, to form new ties and new affiliations which sometimes carried with them new loyalties... Gandhiji noted the change with

painful interest." (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 33-34).

One may be tempted to ask how is it that in the most crucial period of the history of the country the Indian leaders developed a defeatist and surrendering mentality to agree to the vivisection of Mother India. Nehru's own confession to his biographer Michael Brecher was as follows:

"Well, I suppose it was the compulsion of events and the feeling that we could not get out of that deadlock or morass by pursuing the way we had done; it became worse. Further, a feeling that even if we got freedom for India with that background, it would be a very weak India, that is, a Federal India with far too much power in the federating units."

The truth is that all the Indian leaders, including Gandhiji, were now tired old men, no longer capable of fighting. In Nehru's own words (Last Days of the British Raj, L. Mosley, p. 248)—"We were tired men, and we were getting on in years too. The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it." Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, in his book 'Guilty Men of Partition' (p. 56-57) says that there is not the slightest doubt that a decaying leadership operating in a riotous situation produced partition whereas a purposive and more youthful people might have averted it. Even Gandhiji said—"Prospect of power has demoralised us" (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 209). Many people believed that a little more patience and statesmanship on the part of the Indian leaders would have gone a long way to avert the partition. The author of 'The Last Days of the British Raj' irreverently says (p. 247)—"But for Nehru and Patel and all the Congressmen yearning for the fruits of power, the carrot Mountbatten dangled before their noses were too delectable to be refused. They gobbled it down." Two years after the Partition, on the 16th October, 1949, Pandit Nehru declared before an audience in New York that if they had known the terrible consequences of Partition in the shape of killings, etc., they would have resisted the division of India... As for Acharya Kripalani, his choicest sṛṣṭi in later years

were reserved for those in the Congress High Command on whom he put the entire responsibility for partition..." (Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 256). The Partition of India is a great event not only in the history of India but in the history of the world. It was like a Nature's catastrophe reversing the course of history. It has been a crime against India's safety. For its inability to calculate the costs and consequences of Partition, the Indian leadership will certainly be arraigned at the Ear of History.

APPENDIX A

The Tragedy of the Partition of Bengal

The Cabinet Mission plan ensured the unity of India as well as unity of Bengal. But under the said plan, the Eastern section consisting of Bengal and Assam was to have full provincial autonomy except Foreign Affairs and Defence. If the plan had been given effect to, then the Writ of Gandhi and the Congress High Command would have no longer run either in Bengal or Assam. It was impossible for Gandhiji to accept that plan and he put his foot down to suppress it successfully. The complication that arose out of their action on the part of Gandhiji were responsible for the replacement of Lord Wavell by Lord Mountbatten. With Lord Mountbatten's advent on the Indian scene, it became clear that the pace of the Transfer of Power to India would be accelerated and, if necessary, Bengal would be partitioned.

At the sight of Pakistan and of the Partition of Bengal as a consequence, loomed large before the country, the Bengalee Mussalmans took fright. They now became conscious that they might perhaps be ruled by the Punjabis and the Pathans with whom they had absolutely no bond except common religion. Common language is a great bond which is much more effective than common religion. The Bengalee Mussalman has much more affinity with the Bengalee Hindus than with the Mussalmans of Upper India and Western India, from whom they differ in many respects. Almost the entire Muslim population of Bengal are converts from Hinduism. Hindus and Muslims of Bengal speak the same language, they have the same culture and the same literature. The Hindus and the Muslims are equally proud of Bengali language and literature. They used to participate with each other in their joys and sorrows and mix with each other even during their respective religious festivals. The impending calamity of Partition again brought them together.

Seeds of separation had been sown in the early part of the twentieth century by two Governmental actions: Partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905 and the introduction of separate electorates by the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1908. Henceforward, the politico-communal relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims were not so happy as before. But the emergence of C. R. Das as a political leader of Bengal helped to improve matters. So long as C. R. Das was alive, Hindus and Muslims alike followed his political lead both in the Council and the Calcutta Corporation. When C. R. Das became the Mayor of Calcutta, he offered the Deputy Mayorship to Shaheed Suhrawardy and he also gave due share in the appointments of the Calcutta Corporation. In this respect, C. R. Das was ably assisted by Subhas Bose who was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation. The position was however not so happy after the death of C. R. Das. For the deterioration of the communal amity between the Hindus and Muslims of Calcutta, the blame lies more with the Non-Bengalee Muslims than with anybody else. Owing to the machinations of these outside elements, occasionally there were minor communal riots. The feelings of the Bengalee Mussalmans near about 1940 against the Muslim exploiters from other part of India were voiced in a speech made in the Bengal Legislative Assembly by a Bengalee Mussalman Mr. Abu Hussein Sarkar (who afterwards became Chief Minister of East Pakistan). Speaking on the Calcutta Municipal (Amendment) Bill of 1939, which sought to introduce separate electorates in the Calcutta Municipal elections, he said:

“Under the false cry of representing Muslim interests in the Calcutta Corporation, the non-Bengalee elements are trying to perpetuate their hold in Calcutta, and that also in the premier self-governing institution in Bengal. Unfortunately, Sir, the Urdu-speaking non-Bengalees, the Iranis, the Suhrawardys, the Siddiques, the Adamjis and the Currimbhoys are in majority in Muslim Calcutta.”

Bengalee Mussalmans were never much enamoured of the idea of Pakistan but it was the tactics of the Congress High

Command which kept them away from the Congress. Bengalee Mussalman leaders now became afraid that if Jinnah's dream of Pakistan becomes a reality, then they would be ruled by the Punjabees and the Pathans. In these circumstances, when the threat of impending partition became a certainty, a section of the Hindu political leaders led by Sarat Bose and Kiran Sankar Roy joined the leading Muslim politicians of Bengal to form a Front against the impending Partition. The leading Muslims who took part in this joint Front were Shaheed Suhrawardy (Chief Minister of Bengal), late Mahammad Ali of Bogra (sometime Prime Minister of Pakistan) Fazlur Rahaman and Abul Hashem, the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. After much deliberation they evolved a plan of 'Sovereign Bengal' independent of India and Pakistan. Then they approached both Jinnah and Gandhi. Jinnah said that if the Congress and the Muslim League in Bengal could come to an agreement with regard to 'Sovereign Bengal' outside India and Pakistan, he would not stand in their way. But, he added, that in that case he must have entire Punjab for his Pakistan without dividing it in any way.

Gandhiji's attitude was, however, very cautious. When Sarat Bose and Abul Hashem, the Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League, had a joint interview with Gandhiji, Abul Hashem based the case of *United Sovereign Bengal* on the ground of common language, common culture and common history that united the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal alike. 'Whether, Hindu or Muslim, Bengalee was a Bengalee; both had equal abhorrence of being ruled by Pakistanis from over a thousand miles away'! (Pyarelal's *Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 180). Taking the thread of Abul Hashem's argument, Gandhiji said—'Since Bengal's common culture as embodied in Tagore, to which the League Secretary has referred, had its roots in the philosophy of the Upanisads, which was the common heritage not only of Bengal but of the whole of India, would sovereign Bengal contemplate entering into a voluntary association with the rest of India?' Naturally, it was impossible for the League Secretary to answer this question and he kept silent. Reply was, however, furnished by the Bengal Premier Shaheed Suhrawardy at

a Press Conference at Delhi on the 15th May. Suhrawardy said that on all matters affecting Bengal and the Indian Union in common, it should be possible to come to some understanding or arrangement, call it Treaty or whatever you will.

It is a mistake to think that the Bengalee culture is a pure Hindu culture based solely on the Upanisads. Undoubtedly, it has its roots in the ancient Indian culture. But in course of time, it has imbibed many aspects of other cultures. Bengalee culture has a cosmopolitan aspect with a touch of humanism. That explains why rigours of caste-system and untouchability do not find a congenial soil in Bengal. Islam's influence on Bengal has been profound.

Kiron Sankar Roy, one of the leaders of the Congress Party in the Bengal Assembly, had an interview with Lord Mountbatten who showed sympathy with the idea of Sovereign Bengal. He was of opinion that if the Muslim League offered joint electorate and the constitution of a composite Cabinet and recruitment in the services upon a 50:50 basis, Bengal Congress should accept the offer even if it meant setting up a sovereign State of Bengal which would stand out of the Indian Union as well as Pakistan.

Sarat Bose was most enthusiastic about the proposal and took a leading part in bringing Bengalee Hindu and Muslim leaders together. His letter, dated 23rd May, 1947, to Gandhiji showed the extent of agreement between the parties (Vol. II, p. 185, Last Phase by Pyarelal):

"Last Tuesday evening (20th instant) there was a conference at my house which was attended by Suhrawardy, Fazlur Rahaman (Minister), Mahammad Ali (Minister), Abul Hashem (Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, now on leave), Abdul Malek (Member, Bengal Legislative Assembly, representing Labour), Kiron Sankar Roy and Satya Babu (Satya Ranjan Bakshi). We arrived at a tentative agreement, a copy of which is enclosed herewith for your consideration.....

"I still feel that if with your help, advice and guidance, the two organisations can arrive at a final agreement on the lines of the tentative agreement, we shall solve Bengal's problems and, at the same time, Assam's. It may also have a healthy reaction on the rest of India."

Gandhiji's reply, dated 8th June, 1947, was as follows (*ibid*, p. 188):

"I have gone through your draft. I have now discussed the scheme roughly with Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel. Both of them are dead against the proposal and they are of opinion that it is merely a trick for dividing Hindus and Scheduled Caste leaders. With them it is not merely a suspicion but almost a conviction. They feel also that money is being lavishly expended in order to secure Scheduled Caste votes. If such is the case you should give up the struggle at least at present. For the unity purchased by corrupt practices would be worse than a frank partition.....

"You should give up the struggle for unity of Bengal and cease to disturb the atmosphere that has been created for the partition of Bengal."

It is to be noted that the above letter of Gandhiji to Sarat Bose mentioned that Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel were of opinion that Bengal's agitation against the partition was being maintained by bribery and corrupt practices and that Gandhiji considered Sarat Bose as nothing better than a disturbing element. The allegation of Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel was repeated by Gandhiji in his Prayer meeting. This attitude of Gandhiji brought forth angry and vehement protests from Sarat Bose as well as from Shaheed Suhrawardy.

Sarat Bose wrote:

"..... Even after the raging and tearing campaign that has been carried on in favour of partition, I have not the slightest doubt that if a referendum were taken, the Hindus of Bengal by a large majority would vote against partition. The voice of Bengal has been stifled

for the moment, but have every hope that it will assert itself."

Shaheed Suhrawardy's letter was in stronger terms:

"I am sorry that by this statement of yours the issues have also been confused. Newspapers have been only too glad to jump on the statement that the United Bengal Plan is dishonest. I do not expect..... that this letter will have the slightest effect upon you but I consider it my duty to convey to you my reactions in view of the irreparable—pardon me, Mr. Gandhi, for using this expression—mischievous effect that your statement might cause. Not being able to specify whom you mean, you have slandered all persons who believed in a United Bengal."

About this time Gandhiji made an astounding offer to Suhrawardy (Vol. II, p. 183, Last Phase by Pyarelal):

"I recognise the seriousness of the position in Bengal in the matter of partition. If you are absolutely sincere in your professions and would disabuse me of all the suspicion against you and if you would always retain Bengal for the Bengalees—Hindus and Mussalmans—intact by non-violent means, I am quite willing to act as your honorary private secretary and live under your roof, till the Hindus and the Muslims begin to live as brothers that they are."

Suhrawardy exclaimed: "What a mad offer! I shall have to think ten times before I can fathom its implications."

Suhrawardy need not have been astonished. Gandhiji's offer was nothing but the old kite in new disguise.

It may seem strange to many that while Sarat Bose and the Bengalee Muslim leaders were trying to sink their communal differences by mutual agreement, Gandhiji was not only not lending a helping hand towards them but, on the other hand, was thwarting their efforts by saying that 'unity purchased by corrupt practices would be worse than a frank partition.' Gandhiji's letter to Sarat Bose made it clear that if certain contingencies

arose, then not only Nehru and Patel but Gandhiji as well would not shrink from throwing Eastern Bengal to the wolves. Nehru's callous feelings towards Eastern Bengal have been described by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia in his book 'Guilty Men of India's Partition' at p. 17:

"I may be permitted to refer to a private conversation with Mr. Nehru in Noakhali around the end of 1946, to which I had more or less been forced by Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. Nehru spoke of the water, slime, bush and tree he found everywhere in East Bengal. He said that that was not India he or I knew and wanted with some vehemence to cut East Bengal away from the main land of India. That was an extraordinary observation. The man was obviously speaking under an emotional strain. He had set his heart on something....."

The reasons behind the peculiar attitude on the part of non-Bengalee Congress Leaders are not far to seek. The pillars of the Congress were the capitalists of Rajasthan and Western India. It is these people who had the greatest voice in shaping the policy of the Congress and their interest always reigned supreme in the Congress. These capitalists owned rich iron and coal-fields in the Western belt of Bengal and in the Chotanagpur area of Bihar. The control of these regions and of the port of Calcutta was essential in their interest. It was, therefore, natural that the Congress Leaders, who were their spokesmen, were determined that if the worst were to happen and if the partition of India was ultimately decided on, then Bengal was to be partitioned in such a way that the Calcutta Port and the Western belt of Bengal must fall within the territories of the Union of India. The organic unity of the Eastern and the Western Bengal was of no concern to the Congress leaders nor did they care about the sentiments of the Bengalees or the question as to how the common people of Bengal would be politically and economically affected by the partition of Bengal. Fortunately for them and unfortunately for Bengal, the Western belt of Bengal was a Hindu-majority area. The shrewd non-Bengalee capitalists of the Congress now manoeuvred to take full advantage of this position. They contrived to create a

panic and public feeling among the Bengalee Hindus, particularly of Western Bengal, that their only salvation lay in the constitution of the Hindu-majority areas of West Bengal into a separate province. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and his Hindu Mahasabha fell into their trap. As early as the 19th March, 1947; in a statement to the Press (p. 183, Vol. II, Last Phase by Pyarelal) he demanded division of Bengal even in an undivided India. By the deplorable action of Dr. Shyama Prasad and of those who thought alike him, the life-work of the great fighters like Surendra Nath Banerjee, Ananda Mohan Bose, Aswini Kumar Datta, Krishna Kumar Mitra and others who fought a mighty battle against Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal in 1905, was undone. It was a tragedy that these misguided people could not foresee the fate of the Hindu minority in East Bengal.

The agony of the spirit of Eastern Bengal caused by the part played by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and his followers was described in a letter to Gandhiji by one of the old fighters of Lord Curzon's days, namely, Sri Akhil Chandra Datta (Pyarelal's Last Phase, p. 178, Vol. II):

"A movement has been set on foot for partition of Bengal and thus 'secure a home-land for the Hindus.' This appears to be the result of a defeatist mentality. In fact, this movement seems to me be a communal one. Communalism must no doubt be fought, but not by a counter-communal movement for a Home-land for the Hindus. This movement is practically a concession to the principle on which the demand for Pakistan is based. This will not be a solution of the communal problem but will aggravate and perpetuate it. It ignores the fundamental position that communalism is a passing phase and is bound at no distant date to be replaced by political division on economic grounds.....Partition will inevitably lead a section of well-to-do Hindus to migrate to West Bengal, leaving the poorer caste Hindus and scheduled-caste Hindus (who are mostly poor) to save their life, property and honour by conversion to Islam. Partition will be a wrong step politically, economically, socially, linguistically and culturally

"It was my lot in the prime of life to fight against the partition of Bengal, proposed by Lord Curzon. By an irony of fate, I have to fight now in the evening of my life against partition sponsored by my own people....."

Appendix B

THE TRAGEDY OF THE PARTITION OF THE PUNJAB

Though the Punjab is a Muslim-majority Province, generally speaking, communal relationship between the Muslims the Sikhs and the Hindus had run a normal course there. From 1920, when the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were inaugurated, till 1942 when Sir Sikander Hayat Khan was the Chief Minister of Punjab, the Muslim League had no effective voice either with the public or with the Government. The general consensus of opinion among the Muslims in the Punjab was that a United Punjab under a Government representing Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs was the right solution for all political problems of the Punjab.

Let us begin with the political history of the Punjab from 1935 onwards. Sir Fazl-i-Hussain was a powerful figure in Punjab politics in those days. After retiring from the Viceroy's Executive Council, he returned to Punjab politics and began to consolidate his Unionist Party, consisting of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, with Muslims as its major partner. This was quite a proper arrangement because Punjab was a Muslim-majority province. His object in creating the Unionist Party was to create an atmosphere of communal harmony in Punjab. He was not much enamoured of the Muslim League and when Jinnah requested him to preside over the Muslim League Session of 1935, he declined. Neither did he like intrusion of Jinnah in Punjab politics. He used to say that Punjab politics was for the Punjabees alone. Fazl-i-Hussain had a very able lieutenant in the person of Sikander Hayat Khan. In a letter to the latter, Fazl-i-Hussain said—I have also asked Ahmad Yar (Daulatana's father) to strongly press on him (Jinnah) the advisability of keeping his finger out of the Punjab pie (Pakistan by Khalid Bin Sayeed, p. 122).

In the 1937 Punjab elections, the Unionist Party captured the majority of seats. As by this time Sir Fazl-i-Hussain was

dead, the new leader of the Party Sir Sikander Hayat Khan became the Premier of the Province. He gave to the Hindus and the Sikhs their due share in the Ministry. He continued to be the Premier till his sudden death in 1942. So long as Sir Sikander lived he did not allow the communal dragon to raise its head in Punjab. Jinnah or the Muslim League could not make much headway there in their communal and separatist activities. He did not like the Two-nation theory of Jinnah nor did he encourage the establishment of a separate Sovereign State for the Muslims. He advocated the idea of a Federal Constitution for India with autonomy for the provinces so that each province might grow in its own peculiar lines without interference from the Centre. He said that thereby the Muslim majority of Punjab and Bengal would secure a controlling voice in their respective provincial administrations and the fear of Hindu domination from the Centre would be minimised. He explained his ideas in this respect in his speech in the Punjab Legislative Assembly on 11th March, 1941:

“My hon'ble friends have asked me to state my position regarding the future destiny of India. I will do so with pleasure but in my individual capacity..... As I have repeatedly declared, it is my fixed conviction that the future destiny of India lies in accepting a position of freedom within the British Commonwealth.....

“As for the principles on which the new constitution should be based, there again my views are well-known. Under my scheme every unit will enjoy complete autonomy in its internal affairs..... The Muslims fear that if the provinces are not free and autonomous there will always be a danger of undue and unwarranted interference from the Centre, which will be dominated by the Hindus These doubts and misgivings may be unfounded..... but the fact remains that the suspicion and mistrust does exist and I do not see how it is to be removed except by some such device as I have suggested.

“Once the idea of domination and interference is abandoned the problem becomes quite simple. Then the

Muslims would not be justified in asking for a complete severance from the rest of India..... If they still persist, then I think they would be worthy of being sent to a lunatic asylum.....”

His statesmanlike approach to the communal question and his desire to do justice to all communities of Punjab kept the province singularly free from all communal troubles. He used to say that though the Muslims were in a majority in Punjab yet it belonged equally to the Hindus and the Sikhs. In the same speech he said:

“Let us show to the rest of India that we in the Punjab stand united and will not brook any interference from whatever quarter it may be attempted. Then and then will we be able to tell meddling busy-bodies from outside: ‘Hands off the Punjab.’”

This was his thrust to Jinnah who tried to penetrate into and influence the Muslim politics in Punjab. Sir Sikander’s intense desire to keep Punjab free from the evils of communalism was shown from the following words in his said speech—

“So far as we in the Punjab are concerned, let me assure you that we will not countenance or accept any proposal which does not secure freedom for all. We do not desire that the Muslims should domineer here, just as we do not want the Hindus to domineer where the Muslims are in minority. Nor would we allow anybody or section to thwart us because the Muslims happen to be in a majority in this province.....

“If Pakistan means unalloyed Muslim Raj in the Punjab then I will have nothing to do with it. I have said so before and I repeat it once again here, on the floor of this House. If you want real freedom for Punjab, that is to say a Punjab in which every community will have its due shares in the economic and administrative fields as partners in a common concern, then that Punjab will not be Pakistan, but just Punjab, land of five rivers; Punjab is Punjab and will always remain Punjab whatever anybody might say. This then, briefly is the poli-

tical future I visualise for my province and for my country under any new constitution."

The noble words uttered by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan in the aforesaid paragraphs deserve to be written in letters of gold in the annals of Indian history. No more sagacious words ever fell from the lips of any other Statesman. By his words and actions he showed the true path to the Muslims, Hindus and the Sikhs. If the policy laid down by him had been followed, unity of India would not have been disturbed.

With the death of Sir Sikander Hayat Khan in 1942, the serene atmosphere of Punjab was completely changed. The field was now open to Jinnah to inject the communal poison in the body-politics of Punjab. According to him, Punjab was the key-stone of the edifice of Pakistan he was dreaming to build. Unless Punjab was wedded to the 'idea' of 'Pakistan,' Jinnah's Pakistan could not be born.

Battles first begin in the minds of men before they take place actually. For a war, it is necessary to make a preparation for war-mentality. During 1945-47, Jinnah devoted himself to create war conditions in Punjab. He now began his all-out effort to destroy the Unionist Party and to bring all the Punjabee Mussalmans under the banner of the Muslim League and to imbue them with the 'Pakistan' idea. It may be pertinent to observe here that the name 'Pakistan' came to Jinnah as a gift from the Hindu, the British and the Sikh Press in a curious way. As to how the word 'Pakistan' came to be used, Jinnah said as follows:

"You know perfectly well that Pakistan is a word which is really foisted upon us and fathered on us by some section of the Hindu Press and also by the British Press. Now our resolution was known for a long time as the Lahore resolution. But how long are we to have this long phrase? Now I say to my Hindu and British friends: We thank you for giving us one word. (Pakistan by Khalid Bin Sayeed, p. 126.)"

Sir Sikander Hayat Khan said:

"The word 'Pakistan' was not used at the League meeting and this term was not applied to the League resolution by anybody until the Hindu Press had a brain-wave and dubbed it Pakistan. They have sown the wind and must now reap the whirlwind (Speech in Punjab Leg. on 11.3.41)."

Sir Sikander visualised the mischief that this word 'Pakistan' was capable of doing and admonished the Hindu and Sikh Press as follows (Speech in Punjab Leg. on 11.3.41):

"The ignorant masses have now adopted the slogan provided by the short-sighted bigotry of the Hindu and Sikh Press. If I may venture a word of protest and advice, I consider it a fatal mistake on the part of the Hindus and the Sikhs to raise this hare. They probably wanted to create an atmosphere among the Hindu and Sikh masses against the resolution. That was their object..... but they have overlooked the fact that the word 'Pakistan' might have an appeal—a strong appeal—for the Muslim masses. It is a catching phrase and it has caught popular imagination and has thus made confusion worse confounded..... The result is that political adventurers have been provided with vast opportunities of exploiting the ignorant, each according to his own inclination and convenience."

It may be mentioned here in the passing that the idea of Pakistan was first conceived in 1933 in the brain of a young Muslim student, Chaudhury Rahamat Ali, in London. At that time he was only thinking of Muslims of North-West India. The initial letters of Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sind etc. supplied the name of Pakistan. At the time when the idea was conceived and the name was first coined, even the Muslims took him to be a crank, and it is an irony of fate that the name was revived by the folly of the Hindu and Sikh Press at a very crucial period of communal conflicts.

Facts turned out as Sir Sikander feared. The name 'Pakistan' gave a new impetus to separation. This name and the idea behind it gave the Muslim classes and masses something

to be proud of—to make and have a sovereign land of their own. The new idea raised the Muslim League to a higher pedestal in the emotions of the Muslims. From a mere political party the League was converted into a vehicle of a religio-political movement enshrining the suppressed hopes and urges of the Muslims. It was given out that any Muslim who opposed the Muslim League was an enemy of Islam. Muslims had been rulers of India and they again dreamt of a land where they would have supreme power. Jinnah gradually became the symbol of Muslim regeneration.

Educated Muslims wanted political power and a share in the government of the country. Not much propaganda was necessary for them. They were Pakistanis from the very beginning. But the masses also, thanks to the unscrupulous methods of Jinnah's propaganda became more ardent about Pakistan as their religious emotions and sentiments were appealed to. They were made to believe that they would be better Mussalmans after a Muslim State was established as they would be free from the influence of idolatrous Hindu customs and traditions. They were assured that an Islamic form of government based on the laws of the Quran and Shariat would be established in their Pakistan. Services of Pirs, Ulamas and Maulanas were requisitioned. Jinnah who had already been raised to the high pedestal of a Quaid-i-Azam discarded his Western dress and appeared in public meetings in sherwani and encouraged his followers to do so. He knew that the ultimate focus of loyalty of an overwhelming majority of the rural masses was Islam and therefore Islam with its symbols and slogans figured very prominently in all his speeches before the Muslim masses. The Muslim student community particularly those from Aligarh University, were not slow to react. Jinnah formed the All-India Muslim Students' Federation. The students belonging to this Federation were very active in Punjab. They penetrated into the remote corners of Punjab villages to do propaganda work among the Muslim masses. Muslims were now ready for the battle of Pakistan in Punjab. Gradually, the happy days of Sir Sikander's rule were forgotten and the League Muslims of Punjab now clamoured

for undiluted Muslim rule for Punjab and a new class of leaders arose among the Muslims who thrived on communal hatred. This unhappy tendency got further impetus when Lord Wavell bowed to the 'intransigence' of Jinnah at the Simla Conference of June, 1945. In that Conference Lord Wavell's conduct made it abundantly clear to the Muslims that it was Jinnah and Jinnah alone who would be recognised as the leader of the Muslims in India. The result was that in Punjab, the Unionist Khizir Hayat's position was undermined and the Muslim League became invincible. In the general elections of 1946, the League captured the majority of Muslim seats, but as it was not in absolute majority in the Legislature, it could not form a League Ministry. It was Khizir Hayat Khan of the Unionist Party who formed a Coalition ministry of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Having failed to form a ministry, the Muslim League became very sore and concentrated its energies towards overthrowing the Coalition ministry of Khizir Hayat Khan. As its battle tactics, the League adopted the Gandhian methods of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. At first, agitation proceeded on the familiar lines of defence of orders prohibiting meetings and processions; crowds, including women and students, making demonstrations before all Government offices and Government institutions and hoisting League flags on them. But soon after the League's Direct Action Resolution, the agitation took a sinister form: Muslim League National Guards were organised and they were provided with helmets purchased from military disposals and were taught military drill; Muslim women were called upon to learn first aid; parades of Muslim National Guards in military formation began to be very much in evidence in the streets of Lahore. Khizir Hayat Government became alarmed at these developments and declared Muslim National Guards as an unlawful organisation. Next day, Liaquat Ali Khan, the General Secretary of the Muslim League, declared that the Muslim National Guards were an integral part of the Muslim League and an attack on them was an attack on the League. Thereafter, the League so much intensified its illegal activities that the Government had to call the aid of the military and to make numerous arrests including some of the top League leaders. This was, however, a very

uncomfortable position for Khizir Hayat Khan and he ordered the release of the League leaders. Hindu and Sikh supporters of the Ministry did not like this step and the position of Khizir Hayat Khan became further weakened and he resigned on the 2nd March, 1947. Thereafter, Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, summoned the Leader of the Muslim League Party, the Khan of Mamdot, to form the ministry. But as he could not muster the requisite majority for the formation of a ministry, the Governor applied section 93 of the Government of India Act of 1935 and personally assumed the responsibility of Government. It must be regretfully admitted that the Sikh and Hindu leaders of Punjab did not show sufficient guts at this juncture. Instead of giving their unstinted support to Khizir Hayat Khan and courageously facing the battle, they began to feel that their safety lay in a separate homeland for them. Cowardice and defeatism seized them. It was a confession on their part that they, who constituted 45 per cent of the total population, could not hold their own in the struggle for political power and they would be content to withdraw to a safe corner specially reserved for them.

Assumption of the Government by the Governor did not improve matters. There were murder and arson everywhere on a large scale. Deterioration of the law and order position was due to the fact that the British officers had no longer their heart in their jobs and were indifferent to the sufferings of the people. By the mid-day of the 19th March, 1947, according to a statement by Mr. Macdonald, the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government, the campaign launched by the Muslim League had cost in casualties 2049 Hindus and Sikhs killed and 11030 seriously wounded (Pyarelal p. 11, Vol. II). This was the condition Sir Sikander Hayat Khan's Punjab was reduced to by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Pandit Nehru visited some of the riot-affected areas and his remarks were as follows:

"I have seen ghastly sights and I have heard of behaviour by human beings which would degrade brutes..... If politics are to be conducted in this way, then they cease to be politics and become some kind of jungle warfare....."

Appalled by the communal warfare of Punjab, the Congress Working Committee passed the following resolution on the 8th March, 1947:

“During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion.....

“The tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion. *This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.*”

It is interesting to enquire as to how the ideas of dividing Punjab and Bengal got its root in the Congress camp. Liaquat Ali's budget proposals gave a fright to the Congress financiers. Their chief spokesman in the Congress Working Committee was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He was also the organizer and controller of the party-machine. He came to the conclusion that in order to create a strong India, its Government must be made monolithic and fully Congressite. He felt that it was impossible to work with the Muslim League in Coalition and nor was it desirable to give the League an opportunity to form the main Opposition in Indian body-politics because it would then thwart all Congress plans and Congress legislations besides encouraging communal hatred. He was now determined to get rid of the Muslim League once and for all. The Working Committee Resolution of the 8th March suggesting division of the Punjab and Bengal was the outcome of these thoughts of Sardar Patel. He was the main architect of the said resolution. Gandhiji was not at all consulted about this all-important resolution which wanted to change the geography of the land. At that time Gandhiji was in Bihar and wrote to both Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel to explain the Resolution. Sardar Patel's reply was:

"It has been difficult to explain to you the resolution about Punjab. It was adopted after deepest deliberation. Nothing has been done in a hurry or without full thought. That you had expressed your views against it, we learned only from the papers.....

Pandit Nehru's reply was as follows:

"About our proposal to divide Punjab, this flows naturally from our previous decisions. These were negative previously, but now the time for a decision has come..... I feel convinced, and so did most of the members of the Working Committee that we must press for this immediate division so that reality might be brought into the picture. Indeed, this is the only answer to partition demanded by Jinnah!"

Undivided Punjab had a total population of 28 millions at the time,—16 millions Muslims, 7.5 millions Hindus and 4.5 millions of Sikhs. Though the Sikhs were in a minority, they were a very important section of the people. They were spread all over the Punjab. There were big farmers among them who owned and tilled the land. The great system of canals spreading out from the five rivers forming a great irrigation net-work were built by them. Most of these canals were in West Punjab irrigated from rivers whose sources were in East Punjab. Several important Sikh shrines also lay in Western Punjab. In these circumstances, it was clear that if division of the Punjab was effected, no matter where the boundary line was drawn, the entire Sikh community was bound to suffer. But unfortunately there were no wise leaders among the Sikhs. Without wise leadership the Sikhs could not realise the dangers of the impending partition. When ultimately it was decided that the Punjab would be divided, a distinguished British lawyer, Sir Cyril Radcliffe (late Lord Radcliffe) was appointed to do the job with the assistance of some Indian Judges.

When Sir Cyril faced his task, he found that the great irrigation system of the Punjab, built largely by Sikh money, which had turned a desert into a granary of whole India, would be very adversely affected by the Partition. The main channels

of the rivers which supplied the water were all in the East and these were therefore bound to come under India whereas most of the canals and the irrigated lands were in the West and these would naturally fall in Pakistan. This peculiar situation was fraught with great danger. Faced with this situation, Sir Cyril conveyed, in all good will and sincerity, a suggestion to Jinnah and Nehru that wherever the line of demarcation between the two Punjabs may lie, the entire irrigation system should be kept under joint control. Both the leaders were furious at the suggestion. After this rebuff, Sir Cyril kept himself confined to his allotted task. It is a tragedy that the Indian leaders, both Hindu and Moslem, refused to see red signal to which Sir Cyril Radcliffe drew their attention (*The Last Days of the British Raj* by L. Mosley, pp. 198-99).

The Boundary Commission over which Sir Cyril Radcliffe presided was given the following instruction:

"The Boundary Commission is instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. In doing so it will take into account *other factors*."

But how was the phrase 'other factors' to be interpreted? In this connection, a letter from Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, to Lord Mountbatten giving a report of the conversation which the former had had with a noted Sikh leader, Giani Kartar Singh, throws important light on the hopes and aspirations of the Sikhs from the Radcliffe Award:

"Giani then said that they had not viewed partition as being based on the population alone. The Sikhs were entitled to their own land just as much as the Hindus or the Muslims. They must have their shrine at Nankana Sahib, at least one canal system, and finally arrangements must be made so as to bring at least three-quarters of the Sikh population from West to East Punjab. Property must be taken into account as well as population in the exchange, as the Sikhs on the whole were better off than the Muslims. Giani said that unless it was recog-

nised by His Majesty's Government the Viceroy and the party leaders that the fate of the Sikhs was a vital issue, there would be trouble..... they would be obliged to fight" (Last Days of British Raj, by L. Mosley, p. 206).

When ultimately the Radcliffe Award was made public on the 17th August, it was found that he had cut a line of demarcation in such a way that most of the canal systems, which the Sikhs had financed and built, their fertile wheatlands and their great shrine at Nankana Sahib had gone to Pakistan.

With the publication of the Radcliffe Award, began the Sikh-Muslim battle. It is futile to speculate on the point as to who fired the first shot. The Sikhs saw that the Boundary Award was worse even than what they had feared. Their lands, their canals, their homes in the rich and fertile West fell within the boundary of Pakistan. They became mad with rage. The Muslims, on the other hand, with their eyes gleefully cast upon the rich Sikh farm lands were determined to drive out not only the Sikhs but the Hindus as well. British officers who were in charge of their districts had no longer their heart in their work and were not interested in the maintenance of law and order. Over and above, they were all terribly anti-Congress and pro-Muslim. At the height of Punjab disorders, on September 5, 1947, Sir Francis Mudie, the then Governor of West Punjab, wrote to Jinnah: "I am telling everyone that I don't care how the Sikhs get across the border; the great thing is to get rid of them as soon as possible. There is still sign of three lakh Sikhs in Lyallpur moving, but in the end they too will have to go" (Stern Reckoning by G. D. Khosla).

Maulana Azad foresaw the dangers of the proposed partition and gave his warnings but they were ignored. Maulana Azad writes (India Wins Freedom, p. 190):

"I also asked Lord Mountbatten to take into consideration the likely consequences of partition of the country. Even without partition of the country, there had been riots in Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar, Bombay and the Punjab. Hindus attacked Muslims and Muslims had attacked Hindus. If the country was divid-

ed in such an atmosphere, there would be rivers of blood flowing in different parts of the country and the British would be responsible for the carnage.

"Without a moment's hesitation Lord Mountbatten replied, 'At least on this question I shall give you complete assurance. I shall see to it that there is no bloodshed and riot. I am a soldier and not a civilian. Once partition is accepted on principle, I shall issue orders to see that there are no communal disturbances anywhere in the country. If there should be the slightest agitation, I shall adopt the sternest measures to nip the trouble in the bud. I shall not use even the armed police. I will order the Army and the Air Force to act and I will use tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble.

"The whole world knows what was the sequel to Lord Mountbatten's brave declaration. When partition actually took place, rivers of blood flowed in large parts of the country. Innocent men, women and children were massacred. The Indian Army was divided and nothing effective was done to stop the murder of innocent Hindus and Muslims."

On the 17th August, the day on which the Radcliffe Award was made public, Gandhiji received the following wire at Calcutta:

"Since Monday, a terrible massacre of the Hindus has been in progress in Lahore City, surpassing Rawalpindi. Hundreds of dead are lying strewn on the roads. Anarkali bazar and other business quarters have been burnt down. The greater part of the city is in flames. Water-supply in Hindu residential quarters has been cut off. The trapped Hindus, who tried to escape, were shot down by the military and police..... Do something immediately. Your presence in Lahore is necessary."

(Mahatma Gandhi, Last Phase, Vol. 2, p. 383).

Gandhiji forwarded this telegram to Sardar Patel asking him for full information. His remarks were that these were terrible

informations, if true. But worse was to follow. A massacre on unprecedented scale took place at Sheikhupura. Other districts also did not escape murders and destruction of property. The holocaust of Western Pakistan had its repercussions in East Punjab. The streams of fleeing refugees with their tales of woe and suffering made a dreadful impression on the people. The spirit of revenge was in the air, and there ensued a wholesale attack on the Muslims. "Communal frenzy gripped the people on both sides of the border taking a heavy toll of lives and creating an exodus of population between the two Dominions, the like of which has never been known in history." Trouble broke out in Delhi when the refugees from West Pakistan began to pour in Delhi with tales of their manifold miseries, the tales of murder, arson and rape. What happened in Western Punjab were now repeated in Delhi and neighbouring districts. Women, children and aged were not spared, proving that only a thin line divides the man from the beast. Trains were arriving in Lahore station packed with passengers, all of them dead, with messages scribbled on the sides of the carriages reading: "A present from India." So, of course, the Muslims sent back train loads of butchered Sikhs and Hindus with the message: "A present from Pakistan." "In a land which, under Gandhi, had adopted as a national religion the cult of Ahimsa and non-violence, there took place murder, arson, looting, burning and raping such as the world has not seen since the days of Chengiz Khan!" (L. Mosley, p. 243).

Altogether in both the Punjabs, the number of dead were 600,000, 140,00,000 driven from their homes and 100,000 girls kidnapped or abducted. This was the price paid for the division of Punjab.

Appendix C

NETAJI SUBHAS BOSE

A book on the "India's Quest for Freedom" is incomplete without any reference to Netaji Subhas Bose. But as this book has concentrated on the activities of Jinnah and Gandhi, it has dealt with Netaji's activities rather scantily. Netaji's life is so eventful that it requires a separate book. Netaji was a born rebel, he rebelled not only against British Imperialism but also against Gandhian authoritarianism and Gandhian obscurantism. He paid full penalty for his rebellious attitude. British Imperialism put him in jail and Gandhian autocracy expelled him from the Congress.

Subhas entered the Indian Civil Service after passing the competitive examination in England in 1920. But, in response to an inner call, he resigned the Service in May, 1921, and rushed to India to place himself at Gandhiji's service. He saw Gandhiji on the very day he reached Bombay. He was, however, very much "depressed and disappointed" (to use Subhas's own words) by his interview with Gandhiji as he found that there was no ideological common ground between them. He then went straight to Calcutta to meet Deshbandhu C. R. Das. A conversation with Deshbandhu stilled his restless heart—"I felt that I had found a leader and I meant to follow him."

When at the Gaya Congress of 1922, C. R. Das quarrelled with Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and others who were orthodox followers of Gandhiji, and resigned from the Congress Presidentship, Subhas followed his leader. Later on, when C. R. Das formed the Swarajya Party to follow the Parliamentary programme against Gandhiji's wishes, Subhas gave valuable support to him. Subhas was to C. R. Das what Vallabhbhai Patel was to Gandhiji. In every phase of C. R. Das's activities Subhas was his trusty Lieutenant. When C. R. Das became the Mayor of Calcutta, Subhas became its Chief Executive Officer. While he was acting as such, he was arrested in October, 1924, under Regulation III of 1818 and kept in

detention in Burma jail. C. R. Das and Subhas were not destined to meet each other again as C. R. Das died only after a few months in June, 1925. C. R. Das was in indifferent health at the time. There is no doubt that snatching away of Subhas from his side was a cruel blow to Deshbandhu C. R. Das and hastened his death. Subhas mourned the death of C. R. Das in the following words:

“I gave him my heart's deep adhesion and reverent love not so much because I happened to be his follower in the arena of politics, as because I happened to know him..... in his private life..... Once we lived together in jail for eight months; for two months in the same cell. for six months in adjacent ones. I took refuge under his feet because I came to know him thus.....”

Subhas was released from his detention in Burma jail in 1927, and nearabout the same time Jawaharlal Nehru returned from a Russian trip full of advanced socialistic ideas. They joined hands together and formed a Leftist group within the Congress under the name “Independence League.” Subhas-Jawahar leadership caught the imagination of the youth of the country and they flocked under its banner. ‘The formation of the Independence League... with Jawaharlal Nehru was his (Subhas's) first challenge to Gandhiji’ (The Springing Tiger by Hugh Toye, p. 44). The Independence League rapidly became a powerful force to reckon with and the old Gandhian Guards of the Congress took fright that the Congress might perhaps be converted into a Leftist body, if care be not taken to destroy the Independence League at its birth. By this time, the Congress had already been brought under the influence of the capitalists, thanks to Gandhiji and they were determined to keep the Congress as their political organ and mouthpiece. Subhas made an open anti-Gandhi speech in the All-India Youth Conference in Calcutta decrying Gandhian philosophy:

“... A feeling and impression that modernism is bad, large scale production is an evil, wants should not be increased and the standard of living should not be raised..... that the soul is so important that physical cul-

ture and military training can be ignored." (Springing Tiger, p. 44).

He further said:

"Mystics would always hold an honoured place in India but it is not their lead we shall have to follow if we are to create a New India, at once free, happy and great..... we have to live in the present." (Springing Tiger by Hugh Toye, pp. 44-45).

Gandhiji was at this time living in retirement from active politics but he also took a serious note of the new trend towards socialism. The Old Guards and the capitalists now sought Gandhiji's help and brought him out of retirement to check the formation of a Socialist group within the Congress. Subhas-Jawahar group representing the Leftists and the Old Guards representing the Rightists, measured their strength at the annual session of the Congress in 1928. Gandhiji personally moved the main resolution of the Congress but it was opposed both by Subhas and Jawaharlal. When division was called for it was found that Subhas-Jawaharlal amendment secured 45% of the votes. The voting showed how strong and influential the Left Wing of the Congress had become.

Gandhiji now began to think about means to weaken the Leftist Wing inside the Congress and the best way to arrive at the desired end was to break the Jawahar-Subhas combination. Gandhiji never forgot the services that Pandit Motilal rendered to him in the early days of the Non-co-operation movement and that was a factor which made Gandhiji always lean in favour of young Jawaharlal. Gandhiji now proposed that Jawaharlal should be chosen to be the President of the next session of the Congress at Lahore in 1929. It must be remembered that at this time Jawaharlal had played only a minor role in the Congress hierarchy as he was a mere General Secretary to the All-India Congress Committee. His nomination was, therefore, not liked by the leading members of the Working Committee. But as Gandhiji stuck to his choice, the others did not carry their objection any further.

Jawaharlal entered into the office of the President of the Indian National Congress with a great deal of enthusiasm, full

of communistic and Marxian ideas. But his socialistic and communistic ideas could not bear much fruit "as on the other side there was Gandhi with his following of ten members in the Working Committee thinking and acting as a solid block." The President was thus out of tune with the majority of the Working Committee. In his predicament Jawaharlal offered his resignation but he was persuaded, to remain and continue. Gandhiji said about him—"Who can excel him in the love of the country? He is rash and impetuous, some say. This quality is an additional qualification at the present moment..... He is undoubtedly an extremist, thinking far ahead of his surroundings but he is humble enough and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point." The official historian of the Congress said—"While he has fought Gandhi sincerely and strenuously, he has made a point of agreeing with his conclusion."

In the circumstances, it is no wonder that Jawaharlal was again made President of the Congress for the second time in 1935 December, when the Congress held its session at Lucknow. Thereafter he was given another term as President for the Faizpur session in December, 1936. He continued in his post till 1938 when for the Haripura session of the Congress Subhas Bose was nominated. Perhaps Gandhiji thought that thereby he would be able to tame Subhas as he had done in the case of Jawahar.

But from the moment Subhas Bose took office as President, he made it clear that he would like to have an effective hand in shaping and moulding the policy of the Congress. His opposition to the Gandhian philosophy of village-life, bullock-cart and hand-spinning was pronounced. In his view, adoption of bullock-cart politics and negation of scientific methods of production would only help to perpetuate the conditions of servitude of the people. In a speech made before the Indian Science News Association, Calcutta, on the 21st August, 1938, Subhas Bose said that national reconstruction will be possible only with the aid of science and scientists and that far-reaching co-operation between science and politics was absolutely necessary, if India was to take its place with the advanced countries of the world. He proceeded as follows:

"The movement for Indian emancipation has reached a stage when Swaraj is no longer a dream... we are within sight of power... We want first and foremost aid of science.....

"Though I do not rule out cottage industries and though I hold that every attempt should be made to preserve and also revive cottage industries wherever possible, I maintain that economic planning for India should mean largely planning for industrialisation of India." (See p. 51, 52. Cross-roads).

This was almost an open defiance of Gandhian philosophy and Gandhian politics.

Along with above speech made before the Sience News Congress, we may read the Presidential speech delivered by Subhas at the Haripura Congress in February, 1938:

"The Congress stands for the political and economic rights of the people as a whole. If it succeeds in executing its programme, the minority communities would be benefited as much as any other section of the Indian population.

"Moreover, if after the capture of political power, national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines—as I have no doubt it will—it is the 'have-nots' who will benefit at the expense of the 'haves' and the Indian masses have to be classified among the 'have-nots.'" (p. 10, do).

In the opinion of Subhas Bose, socialism and equitable distribution of wealth would be the best panacea for communalism.

He further proceeded—

"Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from the land. To solve the economic problem, agricultural improvement will not be enough. A comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownership and state-

control will be indispensable. Last but not the least, the State will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our agricultural and industrial system in the spheres of both production and appropriation."

It was courageous, almost audacious, for Subhas Bose to proclaim such pronounced socialistic views in the open session of the Congress whose guiding stars were Ultra-Rightists like Gandhiji, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari and others who were never overfriendly towards him. Subhas was not interested in the capitalists but his heart was with the 'have-nots.' He was fired with the zeal of a crusader to make the Congress change its course from capitalism to socialism. In these circumstances it was impossible that the Old Guards could tolerate him. There was no possibility of 'taming Subhas as was done in the case of Jawaharlal as Subhas was built in a different metal.' It is therefore no wonder that for the next year's Congress they were no longer willing to keep Subhas in the *Gaddi*. Of course, the Old Guards have various reasons for their decision to change the President but the real reason is that Subhas ventured to extricate the Congress from the grips of the Gandhian Old Guards, of Gandhian obscurantism and authoritarianism and from capitalism and to lead it towards socialism. Naturally it was impossible for them to surrender the lead to Subhas Bose.

In the old days, the Indian National Congress was a democratic body and there was no supreme controlling authority over the Congress and the President of the Congress was selected in a democratic manner by the majority of the votes of the various Provincial Congress Committees. But since the Congress came under the authoritarian control of Gandhiji, position changed and it was Gandhiji's will that alone counted. When Subhas Bose's presidential term was about to expire, Gandhiji's nomination fell upon Maulana Azad. But as at that time the country was full of communal wranglings, Maulana Sahib did not think it politik to accept the post. Thereupon Gandhiji's choice fell upon Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, a very innocent gentleman, better known as the official historian of the Congress. Subhas Bose was, however, not prepared to obey

the dictate of Gandhiji and stood on his democratic right to contest the election, and he gave the following reasons for his actions:

"In discussing the question, all sense of false modesty will have to be put aside for the issue is not a personal one... People are veering round the opinion that, as in other free countries, the Presidential election in India should be fought on the basis of definite problems and programmes so that the contest may help the clarification of issues and give a clear indication of the working of the public mind. An election contest in these circumstances may not be an undesirable thing.

"Uptill now I have not received any suggestion or advice from a single delegate asking me to withdraw from the contest. On the contrary I have been nominated as a candidate from several provinces without my knowledge or consent and I have been receiving pressing requests from Socialists as well as non-Socialists in different parts of the country urging me not to retire. Over and above this, there seems to be a general feeling that I should be allowed to serve in office for another term. It is possible that this impression of mine is not correct and that my election is not desired by the majority of delegates. But this could be verified only when voting takes place on the 29th January and not earlier." (p. 87, Cross-roads).

On the 28th January, just on the eve of the Presidential election which was to take place on the next day, Subhas uttered a spirited protest against the actions of the Rightist group within the Congress led by Sardar Patel and definitely declined to withdraw his candidature (p. 102, Cross-roads):

"When my name was formally proposed as a candidate from several provinces, it was done without my knowledge or consent. Rightly or wrongly, a very large body of opinion within the Congress wanted me to be elected for another term. It now appears that some important members of the Working Committee, for

reasons which it is difficult to comprehend, did not approve of the idea. It cannot be doubted that my re-election would have been virtually unanimous if they had not sent a mandate to vote against me. It now appears that they would have rather anybody else than my humble self.

"Do they object to me because I would not be a tool in their hands or do they object to me because of my ideas and principles?

"It is too much for a group within the Working Committee to claim that they will dictate the selection of the President every time. If we are to have a proper election by the delegates and not nomination by a group within the Working Committee, then it is essential that the delegates should have a free and unfettered choice.

"If this freedom is not guaranteed to them, then constitution of the Congress will cease to be a democratic one. It is no use having a democratic constitution for the Congress, if the delegates do not have the freedom to think and vote as they like." (p. 102-104, do.)

Next day, i.e. on the 29th January, election results were announced. Subhas Bose defeated Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya by more than 200 votes. Wardha was shocked to hear the news and the remark was—'The work of twenty years has been undone overnight.'

After two days, the great Mahatma, announced his verdict in a message which was most un-Gandhian to say the least:

"Mr. Subhas Bose has achieved a decisive victory over his opponent Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. I must confess that from the very beginning I was decidedly against his re-election for reasons into which I need not go..... Nevertheless, I am glad of his victory; and since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate the defeat is more mine than his..... Congress is fast becoming a corrupt organization of bogus members. I have no doubt

that many of the delegates who have been elected on the strength of the bogus voters would be unseated on scrutiny....."

"After all, Subhas Babu is not an enemy of the country..." (pp. 105-6, Cross-roads).

Then he issued a general instruction that those who could not keep pace with Subhas Babu's policy and programme must come out of the Congress. "I must remind all Congress-men that those, who being Congress-minded remain outside it by design, represent it most."

Election of Subhas Bose as the President of the Congress was followed by sensational developments culminating in the resignation of twelve out of fifteen members of the Working Committee headed by Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru issued a characteristic equivocal statement supporting the resigning members without formally resigning his membership. Thereafter the party machinery set to work with full force, and preparations were made for a battle royal in the session of the Congress itself.

Congress session was, in usual course, held at Tripuri in March, 1939. Gandhiji deliberately absented himself from the session. He thought that the Rajkot States people's grievances were more important than the Congress proceedings under Subhas Bose and, therefore, he went to Rajkot instead. At Tripuri, the Old Guards of the Congress succeeded in gaining their ascendancy. They virtually censured the President and imposed humiliating terms on him as regards the formation of his Working Committee. As regards the attitude of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the Congress, Subhas Bose in a letter, dated 17.4.39, to his nephew said as follows:—(p. 113, Cross-roads).

"Nobody has done more harm to me personally and to our cause in this crisis than Pandit Nehru. If he had been with us—we would have had a majority. Even his neutrality would have probably given us a majority. But he was with the Old Guards at Tripuri. His open propaganda against me has done me more harm than the activities of the twelve stalwarts. What a pity!"

What Subhas saw at Tripuri and the heartless treatment he received there, shook him to his bones and he gave vent to his feelings of agony in an article in *Modern Review* (April, 1939):

“Owing to morally sickening atmosphere of Tripuri I left that place with such a loathing and disgust for politics as I have never felt before during the last nineteen years. As I tossed in my bed at Jamdoba, by day and by night, I began to ask myself again and again what would become of our public life when there was so much of pettiness and vindictiveness even in the highest circles. My thoughts naturally turned towards what was my first love in life—the eternal call of the Himalayas. If such was the consummation of our politics—I asked myself—why did I stray from what Aurobindo Ghose would describe as ‘the Life Divine.’ Had the time now come for me to tear the veil of Maya and go back to the fountain-head of all love? I spent days and nights of moral doubt and uncertainty. At times the call of the Himalayas became insistent. I prayed for light in my dark mind. Then slowly a new vision dawned on me and I began to recover my mental balance—as well as my faith in man and in my countrymen. After all, Tripuri was not India.”

In view of the open hostility shown to him by the orthodox followers of Gandhiji and unhelpful attitude of Gandhiji himself, Subhas had no alternative but to resign from the Presidentship of the Congress. When Poet Rabindranath Tagore heard about his resignation and the circumstances under which he was compelled to resign, he sent the following message to Subhas:—

“The dignity and forbearance which you have shown in the midst of a most aggravating situation has won my admiration and confidence in your leadership. The same perfect decorum has still to be maintained by Bengal for the sake of her own self-respect and thereby to help to turn your apparent defeat into a permanent victory.” (p. 173, Cross-roads).

Thereafter Subhas Bose founded his “Forward Block” which he hoped would be the rallying centre of the Leftist ele-

ments in the Congress, but his hopes were not realised. The Rightist elements in the Congress were all powerful and the dissidents were never allowed to raise their head. Subhas Bose himself was expelled from the Congress and expulsion order was also passed against his elder brother Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose for some alleged acts of indiscipline.

British Government also did not give Subhas peace or rest. Soon after his expulsion from the Congress he was put in jail by the Government. From the jail he wrote a remarkable letter which deserves to be preserved as his political testament: (p. 342, Cross-roads).

"No sacrifice is ever futile. It is through suffering and sacrifice alone that a cause can flourish and prosper, and in every age and clime the eternal law prevails—'the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church.'

"In this mortal world, everything perishes and will perish—but ideas, deeds and dreams do not. One individual may die for an idea—but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives. That is how the wheels of evolution move on and the ideas and dreams of one generation are bequeathed to the next. No idea has ever fulfilled itself in this world except through an ordeal of suffering and sacrifice.

"To my countrymen I say—Forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the grossest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law—you must give life if you want to get it. And remember that the highest virtue is to battle against iniquity, no matter what the cost may be."

He was in a critical state of mind while in jail. Aggrieved by what he thought acts of persecution on the part of Gandhiji and the Congress High Command, he opened his heart in some letters written from jail to his elder brother Sarat Chandra Bose. The letter, dated 31.10.40 runs as follows: (p. 328, Cross-roads).

"The more I think of Congress politics, the more convinced I feel that in future we should devote more energy and time to fighting the High Command. If power goes into the hands of such mean, vindictive and unscrupulous persons when Swaraj is won, what will happen to the country? If we don't fight them now, we shall not be able to prevent power passing into their hands. Another reason why we should fight them now is that they have no idea of national reconstruction. Gandhism will land Free India in a ditch—if free India is sought to be rebuilt on Gandhian non-violent principles, India will then be offering a standing invitation to all predatory powers..."

It may be mentioned here that the schemes of a National Planning Commission and a National Research Council were conceived in the brain of Subhas Bose in 1938-39 and he elaborated these ideas in his Presidential speech in Haripura Congress of 1938 and also while he presided over the Indian Science News Association in the same year. He instinctively felt that Swaraj was coming and therefore the question of national reconstruction had become of prime importance. He wanted to reconstruct India in a scientific and rational way and not in the Gandhian way. He hoped that he would be able to mould the future policy of national reconstruction and therefore he wanted the Presidentship of the Congress for a second term. One year was too short a term to develop and give shape to his ideas. Gandhians saw in Subhas Bose a great danger to Gandhism and the vested interests it had created and therefore they wanted to shunt him off. According to the Old Guards of Gandhism, no one should have a place in Congress unless he was a Gandhian. All original thoughts were to be tabooed there. Only Gandhian thoughts were to be allowed to be given expression. There was no place in the Congress for people like Mrs. Annie Besant, Mohammad Ali Jinnah or Subhas Bose.

Another letter from the jail, dated 24.10.40 says as follows: (p. 327, Cross-roads).

"The latest phase of Gandhism with its sanctimonious hypocrisy... its outrage on democracy and its queer and un-understandable formula for political ills..... is

sickening to a degree. One is forced to wonder which is a greater menace to India's political future—the British bureaucracy or Gandhian hierarchy...”

This was the last verdict of Netaji Subhas Bose on Gandhi, Gandhism and the Congress High Command before he disappeared from India in the middle of January, 1941.

After making a pathological examination of the ills that have been caused to the body-politics of the Congress by Gandhism, Subhas made the following observation, or prophecy one may call it:

“The day is not far off when this brand of Gandhism will stand unmasked.” (p. 321, Cross-roads).

Perhaps time has now come to discard the uncritical hero-worship of Gandhiji and to make a searching, dispassionate and objective enquiry into every phase of Gandhism in order to find the correct path for the future.

EPILOGUE

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND THE WORLD

The carving out of a separate Muslim Sovereign State out of old India has not done any good to either country. The creation of Pakistan has solved no problem. For the last eighteen years both countries had maintained war-like attitudes towards each other and had been spending borrowed money on munitions and armaments—money which could otherwise have been utilised for raising the standard of living of the common people. Ultimately in August and September of 1965, there was a war between them. The only tangible result of this war has been that there have been heavy casualties on both sides, and still the war-hysteria in either country does not show any sign of abatement.

For the sake of both Hindus and Muslims of India and Pakistan and for the sake of safety and defence of the country and for the sake of world-peace it is necessary that there must be some modification of the Partition. What form this modification should take, whether Federal form, or a Confederate form, can be decided later. But, first of all, a desire to unite must be created. Attempts should be made to obliterate hatred and bitterness between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Apportionment of blame for the creation of Pakistan must be avoided. Both parties should admit that both are to blame, more or less in equal degree and both should be in a repentant mood.

It is a mistake to think that India belongs to Hindus alone. India belongs to everyone who considers this country as his mother country and who is devoted and dedicated to its cause. The whole history of India is a history of synthesis—of cultures, races and communities. Countless groups of people had come from abroad and settled down in India and had been absorbed by it. They made their impact felt on the country and eventually made the country their home.

Unity in diversity has been the spirit of India. The Hindu religion itself is an illustration on the point. Within it, one finds the highest idealistic view of life as represented in Vedanta and also the grossest form of superstitions and idolatry. There is no compulsion in it to change one's religious beliefs. Religious persecutions which were found so prevalent in early days of European Christianity in the various forms of Inquisitions have been quite alien to Hinduism. From the earliest times, India has welcomed persons of all religious beliefs within her shores. Thus, we find Syrian Christians and Parsis seeking refuge in India from religious persecutions in the countries in which they were born. Narrow nationalism or religious bigotry was absolutely unknown in India. Ninety per cent of the Mussalmans are of Indian origin with no homeland anywhere else. Morally and rightfully they belong to India and India is their motherland along with the Hindus. They are in no way inferior as citizens of India than the Hindus.

From what has been written above, it is clear that if there is one word which symbolises the spirit of India from the earliest times, it is 'Tolerance'. Tolerance towards every view of religious thought and tolerance towards all people.

If there is one book which expresses the soul of India, it is the Bhagwat Geeta. The essence of this book is universalism and it is based on the conception that humanity is one and indivisible. There is nothing in it to which a Christian, a Muslim or a Buddhist can take exception. Humanism is the religion of the Geeta and it envisages that one day humanity will be an integrated whole. In order that humanity can live and tread on its destined path towards perfection, law and order must be maintained. Law and order can only be maintained by strong hands imbued with a sense of social justice. At the time of the Mahabharata the rule of the Kauravas had deteriorated into the rule of tyrants where even the honour of women was not respected as is instanced in the attempted dishonour of Draupadi in the Raj-sabha itself. According to the Hindu scripture Sri Krishna, the Incarnate of Vishnu, the preserver of the world, had taken his birth as a human being—an Avatar—to uphold the cause of Dharma—the rule of law. Krishna

selected the Kshattriya Prince Arjuna for the purpose of destroying the evil-doers but Arjuna developed suddenly the softer human qualities and wanted to avoid blood-shed. Then Krishna came out with his injunctions that in order that humanity can reach its destiny of perfection it is necessary that Law and Order and Peace and Harmony must be maintained by ruthless destruction of evil-doers. He then extolled the virtues of Courage, Strength and Virility which are the *sine qua non* for the progress of humanity. Cultivate Courage, Strength and Virility and put them in the service of God and Humanity—that is the teaching of the Bhagwat Geeta.

It is the law of Nature that the direction of the flow of energy is from higher to lower potential. Whenever there is any invasion of any country from outside or whenever there is occupation of a country by foreigners, it is an indication that, for some reason or other, that country has remained weak or has become weakened, and it requires re-inforcement of fresh energy. There have been instances in history when this fresh energy has been supplied by the rise of a New Leader in the country. But where the country has failed to supply any such great leader, then the country is bound to go under the domination of foreign rulers for a time. When the foreign rulers fail to get assimilated with the people of the country, they are bound to leave the country after a time as the Romans had to leave Britain after ruling over it for a short period. On the other hand, if the invaders settle down in the land and become assimilated with the indigenous people, in course of time they become the sons of the soil, as the Norman Conquerors became merged with the native Britons. In India also, the early Aryan invaders became assimilated with the Dravidians and other original inhabitants of India.

Nature intended India to be a geographical unit as well as an epitome of the whole world—unity in diversity. The geographical unity of old India is shown by its natural boundaries on all sides, the Great Father Himalayas in the North and the

seas on other sides. There is no part of the world better marked out by nature to be a region by itself as India. Again, it is an epitome of the world from the point of view of climate, anthropology, geology, botany, meteorology etc. Whatever is found elsewhere in the world can be found here. One meets varieties on all sides—varieties in men, in physical nature of the country, in climate. Even in the field of religion, under the wide canopy of Hinduism, there are races and people belonging to all stages of social evolution and civilisation with languages, manners, customs, cults and cultures of different kinds. Nearly all the world religions are represented among the people here. Nature intended India to have a great destiny and Islam came to India to fulfil the said destiny. On the eve of the Muslim invasion, India had become very weak and was divided into innumerable small kingdoms. History follows a destined path. As we have said before, nature made India a unit. The first requirement for the intended destiny of India was that it should be a political unit. It was therefore a historical necessity that the innumerable small kingdoms into which India was divided must be brought together and form a powerful Indian whole. There were none among the Hindu rulers who had the vision or strength to take bold steps towards Indian unity. Therefore India's destiny required that some virile foreign people should come and undertake the task of unifying India. No people have any vested right in any country or in any land. Nature which vested India with all kinds of varieties did not intend that India should be the exclusive property of Hindus alone, however weak, emaciated or unworthy they might be. India needed bold and dynamic people for the growth, development and fulfilment of her destiny. When the Muslim invaders from outside came to India, they came in response to an inner call of the soul of India so that the innumerable small kingdoms into which India was divided might be brought together so as to form a powerful whole. Alauddin Khiliji and some of his successors who, after conquering Northern India, penetrated into the South, were mere instruments of India's destiny. The same thing may be said about

the role played by the Great Moghul Emperor Akbar. Islam came as an invading force but later settled down in the country as part and parcel of India. Indo-Muslim culture that was developed thereafter enriched the whole life of India. It showed a new way of life drawing people away from futile asceticism and negativism. The standard of living became higher. Joy and plenty encouraged by the new rulers expressed itself in art, architecture, in new cities, in gorgeous buildings and mausoleums, in painting, in music, in rich food and clothing, even in religion and philosophy. Debt of India to Islam cannot be overestimated. The lower strata of people inside the Hindu hierarchy of caste who suffered intolerably at the hands of the vested interests of the higher castes found relief by embracing Islam which preached equality and brotherhood of all men.

From the sixteenth century onward, with the advent of that period which is known in European history as the period of the Renaissance, sages of the West devoted themselves to the study of the forces of nature and these studies resulted in the advancement of scientific and technical knowledge. During this period, Asia and Africa remained satisfied with religiosity and obscurantism and showed no inclination for any scientific knowledge. Knowledge is Power. New scientific knowledge gave European nations new power and they started on their adventure of conquest of the world firstly by way of finding new markets for their goods and later on to found Colonial Empires. The whole world, in this way, lay at the proud feet of the various European Powers. This was in pursuance of the Law of Nature that the direction of the flow of energy is from higher to lower potential. Nature intended that Asia and Africa must not remain in dark ages always and they must come up to a higher standard of living through an intermediate stage of colonialism, which was to be however a transitional phenomenon. This was no doubt unfortunate for the Asians and the Africans but it was in pursuance of the eternal Law of Karma, which says that as you sow so you will reap. There is a philosophy behind history. God meant knowledge to be spread for amelioration of human miseries but the

European nations utilised it for their own aggrandisement and the result was mutual war between thieves for the stolen booty. Nature meant that as a result of murderous wars among the power-mad European nations, Asia and Africa shall gain their freedom. The more we study history with a spirit of humility the more we feel that there is a moral force working in nature which a power-mad nation would ignore only at its own risk and peril.

In accordance with the dictates of the inexorable law of nature, the British, the most advanced power of Europe came to India out of sheer historical necessity, and with a two-fold purpose: firstly, to unite India into an integrated whole, and secondly, to bring out India from the sluggish back-waters of ignorance and obscurantism and to put it in the dynamic current of modern scientific knowledge. With all its defects the British rule in India has conferred incalculable benefits on India. It gave us the finest system of law and legal procedure, an efficient system of administration, and an incorruptible body of civil servants. But its greatest gift has been the English language which has been a powerful factor in the integration of India as a whole. The psychological unity of the English-educated men from every corner of India forged the collective will for freedom. It was from the English thinkers and from western ideas of humanism that the idea of liberty and freedom grew in India. English should be honoured as the second sacred language of India as it has opened to us the gorgeously rich stores of scientific and humanistic knowledge enormously enriching the mind of the educated India.

Islam and the British came to India as a result of the dialectical operations which go on ceaselessly in nature towards the progress of humanity. Nature does not take any notice of Hinduism, Islam or Christianity but it is concerned with the creation of health, vigor and efficiency which are the necessary ingredients of human development. The vigour of Islam and the efficiency of the British were both necessary for India as the

indigenous elements of the people in India could not supply these needs which nature required for India's development. Nature intended that India must develop and must become part of a whole one-world which is bound to come in accordance with the world movement. Science and Technology are pointing unmistakably to the idea that the world is one and humanity is indivisible, but within the frame of unity there is room for diversity. The sooner the moral sense of man understands the implication of this idea, the better it is for humanity. At a stage of human development Nationalism is a necessity, but a time is soon coming when Nationalism must merge itself into Internationalism. In the Middle East we find that after the First World War, after the abolition of the Caliphate, the fanaticism of Islam gradually subsided. In this matter, the Young Turks and Mustafa Kemal Pasha showed the way. A time is coming when it will be a matter of little political significance whether a man is a Hindu, Muslim or Christian. The true world religion would come when it dawns upon each of us that 'I am my brother's keeper'. Science and Technology, no less than a sense of morality are trying to teach us this fundamental truth, if only we pay heed to the voice of nature. Bitterness, hatred, war and strife would vanish when once we realise this. This is no mere idle dream. Hydrogen bombs, Megaton bombs and other weapons of nuclear physics are temporary evils through which permanent good would result because that is the way of dialectical progress in nature through dialectical process. Progress of science will not destroy the world but it will help to create a common humanity and a human fraternity. A World Government would come which would be of federal nature because unity in diversity is the underlying principle in nature. Law will take a new shape and International Law will rule the world.

If this be the future inevitable tendency for political development of the world, then why should we not make an attempt just now to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together and bring India and Pakistan together. Both these questions are inextricably connected and unless both of them are attempted to

be solved at the same time, they will not be solved. The Hindu-Mussalman problem in India itself will never be solved until and unless India and Pakistan are brought together by a Federal or Confederal Union. Thereafter, their united voice will be a dominating force in World politics. Their combined voice will not be less powerful than those of America or Russia in the Council of the Nations,—nay, it may be more powerful, because it is sure to have, if it moves with proper circumspection, the whole of Southern Asia behind it. This will be a glorious future for India and Pakistan. Here lies the chance for India and Pakistan to lead Asia and the world.

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